INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESEARCH
TOWN AND COUNTRY SERIES
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER, Director

DIAGNOSING THE RURAL CHURCH

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DIAGNOSING THE RURAL CHURCH

A Study in Method

BY

C. LUTHER FRY

With a Foreword by
PROFESSOR FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS

WITH TABLES, CHARTS AND MAPS

United Theological Seminary
BV
638
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1924
15,517

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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DIAGNOSING THE RURAL CHURCH
—B—
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOREWORD

By Professor Franklin H. Giddings

An almost revolutionary change in the quality of social and societal survey work has come about within ten or fifteen years. It was prevailingly impressionistic and deplorably loose. It has become creditably scientific, and in multiplying instances it is attaining thoroughly good scientific standards. Mr. Fry's comparative study of Protestant Churches in rural areas is an outstanding example of the best scientific workmanship. To a sound training in sociology and in up-to-date business principles, he has added to his qualifications a first-rate equipment in the logic of statistical interpretation and the technique of statistical method. As the true scientific mind always does, he limits his inquiry to a determination of fact and to the correlation (in the statistician's meaning of the word) of fact with fact, leaving to readers who may consult his work all questions of approval or disapproval of the conditions which his study reveals. He gives us diagnosis only. This should inspire confidence in his findings, and I am sure that it will. These findings are significant, and in certain instances perhaps unexpected and a bit startling. The book adds richly to our knowledge, and I take sincere pleasure in commending it.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to discover, and if possible to measure, the strength of certain tendencies in the field of the rural church.

The method of analysis was the comparative. The plan was simply to compare similar churches at work in different environments, or different types of churches operating in similar surroundings. This method was made possible largely through the information gathered (1) by the Interchurch World Movement in 1920 and (2) by the Honorable Gifford Pinchot and Rev. Charles O. Gill in 1910 when they investigated the church situation in Windsor County, Vermont. As the latter study was published in book form, it need not be described here in detail. Interested readers are referred to *The Country Church,* Gill and Pinchot, Macmillan, 1914. But with the Interchurch data it is different. No detailed statement of its aims and methods has been published. As this material forms the basis of Parts I and II of this report, it is necessary to describe and to evaluate it, which, therefore, is the purpose of this Introduction.

The Interchurch World Movement, which was established early in 1919, set as one of its objectives the surveying of every evangelical church in America. This was probably the largest survey program ever undertaken. Because of the organization's collapse in the summer of 1920, the aim was far from realized; but the Movement's Town and Country Division, under the direction of Dr. Edmund deS. Brunner, did succeed in collecting facts about many thousands of individual churches. Moreover, other organizations, notably the Ohio Council of Churches and the Institute of Social and Religious Research, brought to completion some of the unfinished rural surveys of the Interchurch.

As the name implies, the town and country surveys of the Interchurch were limited to rural areas. Another department of the Movement had charge of surveying cities, which were defined as places with 5,000 or more inhabitants. Thus the rural surveys, with few exceptions, did not include population centers of more than 5,000 save in their rural interrelationships.

The town and country surveys were also confined very largely to Protestant churches. The Interchurch World Movement was an organization of Protestant bodies only and was interested primarily in evangelical churches. The Town and Country Department tried, nevertheless, to secure some information about the non-Protestant organizations; but on the whole the data for these churches was too incomplete to be of much value. Since this comparative study of churches is based upon the Interchurch material, non-Protestant churches have necessarily been omitted from the analysis.

For much the same reasons, Negro churches have been excluded. Because of the race question, the Interchurch decided that a separate division in charge of Negroes was essential for an adequate survey of their churches. The department was just getting under way when the Movement went to pieces, so that its actual survey work was negligible. This book has been confined, therefore, to *a comparative study of white Protestant churches in rural areas.*

THE INTERCHURCH SURVEYORS

To carry out its investigations the Town and Country Division secured the services of about sixty full-time paid executives known as survey supervisors and assistant supervisors. The task of these supervisors was to secure data about the rural churches of a given state or region. The accuracy of the Interchurch surveys depended so largely upon these supervisors that a word must be said about their qualifications. Some had had years of experience in survey work of this character. For example, the state supervisor of

Vermont was Rev. Charles O. Gill, who in collaboration with the Honorable Gifford Pinchot had conducted intensive church surveys in both New England and Ohio.[1] Other supervisors had had wide experience in survey work under the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church. As early as 1912 that organization under the direction of Dr. Warren H. Wilson had been conducting rural church studies in various counties throughout the United States, and in carrying out this work the Department had trained a number of field workers to assist in the actual surveys. A half dozen of the men trained in this way were employed by the Interchurch as survey supervisors.

A second group of surveyors included professors in the social science departments of colleges and universities; the state supervisor of Iowa was the head of the Department of Sociology at Iowa State College of Agriculture, and the supervisors of Colorado, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Minnesota and Missouri were professors who had been released by their institutions to carry on this work.

In addition to the experienced surveyors and the trained sociologists, the Interchurch World Movement secured certain ministers who were unusually qualified for this kind of work. Rev. B. F. Lamb, the survey supervisor for Ohio, stands out notably in this group.

In many cases these survey supervisors conducted actual field investigations under their personal direction or that of a qualified full-time assistant. About 10 per cent. of the counties completely studied by the Movement were surveyed by these men. As most of these studies were made for demonstration purposes, the work was usually quite accurate.

Our purpose is not to prove that all of the state supervisors of the Interchurch World Movement were exceptionally qualified for their task, but merely to point out that some of the men were well fitted for their work and capable of turning out reliable studies.

Within each state the town and country survey was or-

[1] See *The Country Church*, Gill and Pinchot; Macmillan, 1914; and *Six Thousand Country Churches;* Macmillan, 1919.

ganized on a county basis. In other words the information about rural churches was collected county by county. The state survey supervisors were instructed, in the carrying out of this program, to select in each county a local survey supervisor who should be in charge of the survey in that county and who should have a number of associates. These "teams" were responsible for securing the data desired by the Interchurch. For this they received no compensation other than actual expenses; but they were trained for their tasks by the state supervisors.

The qualifications of these county surveyors varied more widely than those of the state supervisors. In nearly every instance the county surveyors were local residents and were therefore well acquainted with the area they were asked to survey. The majority of these men were ministers, yet more than 1,000 out of the 8,000 persons who gave their time to this enterprise were laymen and laywomen, notably school teachers, college instructors, professors, and to a less extent students in sociology who undertook this survey work for academic credits in connection with their course. In not a few cases the departments of sociology at state universities and colleges coöperated by sending their students to carry on investigations under the direction of a member of the faculty. This was true of Emory University, Georgia; Maryville, Tennessee; and the Iowa College of Agriculture. Students from the University of Wisconsin were also used in the actual field survey in that state; and Professor Dwight Sanderson of Cornell University surveyed Tompkins County in which the institution is located. In addition to the survey work conducted under academic auspices, a number of the church boards released full-time workers to make county surveys. For example, the Presbyterian Board supplied a full-time worker to survey nine counties in Indiana, as well as two persons to make similar studies in the southern mountains. In commenting on the accurate nature of some of the survey work a word must be said about certain of the younger ministers, who, with the training in sociology and economics which their academic courses had afforded, and with their intimate knowledge of the com-

munities in which they lived, were able to turn out excellent survey results.

By the time the Interchurch was compelled to close its doors, the town and country survey had been organized in every state in the Union, and local teams had been set up in more than 2,400 of America's 3,000 counties. At the end, when the state survey supervisors were instructed to forward to headquarters all of the information collected up to that time, it was found that results of considerable value had been secured from more than 1,000 of the counties, and that several hundred had been completely surveyed.

THE SURVEY TECHNIQUE

The field organization built up by the Town and Country Division was asked to collect its information on the basis of an elaborate technique worked out by the Movement's New York office. The method was based on the assumption that it was impossible to understand the functioning of any church without a knowledge of its social and economic environment.

According to this procedure the local unit for assembling the material was the community, regarded usually as the trade area of the town or village center. Previous surveys had usually taken minor civil divisions as the local unit, and it is believed that this shifting of the center of interest from an arbitrary geographical unit to that of a trade center was one of the most important innovations in survey technique adopted by the Interchurch. But the disadvantage of using the community is that census and other statistical data are seldom available on that basis. This fact materially increases both the labor involved in collecting the material and the possibility of error. The great advantage is that it presents results on the basis of units that have real social significance which township lines, voting districts, etc., seldom have. This advantage, it is believed, more than compensates for the disadvantages.

The chief processes involved in the actual field work of these surveys were:

1. Determining the location of the various communities within the given county. The community boundaries were ascertained by noting the location, on each road leading out from a given center, of the last family that regularly traded at that place. These points, indicated on a map, were connected by straight lines. The area about the given center thus enclosed was regarded as the community. Where communities overlapped county boundaries, survey responsibility was allocated by the state supervisors.

2. Studying the economic, social and institutional life of each community. This data was collected by the county survey teams upon uniform questionnaires sent out by the New York office.

3. Locating each church in the county, the determination of its parish area, and the detailed study of its equipment, finance, membership, organization, program and leadership. Here again the facts were gathered by the questionnaire method.

4. Preparing a large map showing, in addition to the usual physical features, the boundaries of each community, the location of each church, its parish area, the residence of each minister, and his circuit connections.

Virtually all of the information collected by the Town and Country Division was gathered by means of questionnaires or maps. The questionnaires employed were the product of a heterogeneous group of specialists, and were therefore long and detailed. At the inception of the Interchurch World Movement the Town and Country Department called a conference of thirty experts to prepare the lists of questions that should be asked on the field. The group wrestled at length with this problem. To satisfy the various interests represented, it was necessary to include a large number of inquiries, so that the final product consisted of more than 500 questions of which 100 dealt with the county as a whole, about 150 with the community and approximately 250 with the individual church. As all of these questions have not been utilized in the present study, it has not been considered necessary to print the original schedule verbatim. Roughly it consisted of the following:

1. *Survey of a County.* This questionnaire fixed the location of the county and then took up the matter of population, going particularly into the question of race and nationality. "What was the growth of the population during the past ten years?" etc. Section two dealt with roads, their extent, maintenance and construction, as well as with the methods of financing them. The third and fourth

subdivisions covered the public and other school systems, and took up not only the question of attendance but the salaries of school officials and the like. Section five dealt with other institutions such as hospitals, asylums, homes for the aged, etc., while part six listed the organizations and individuals serving the entire county, including such organizations as the County Farm Bureau, the Grange, County Health or Nursing Association, etc. It also inquired about the county probation officer, the health officer, and the county agricultural agent. The final section went into the matter of leadership. Here the attempt was made to list the men and women in the county who had special influence throughout the region along political, economic, educational or religious lines.

2. *Survey of a Community.* After locating the community, this questionnaire took up the economic situation. Here the surveyor was asked to name and describe the most important industries and types of agriculture in the area. The next set of questions dealt with population, its distribution and the shifts in population during the last decade. Section five discussed the "social mind." Under this heading the main subdivisions were the means of communication, the available leadership, the social classes into which the population fell, and the community activities. Section six described social organizations and social life. It listed the membership and activities of such agencies as the Grange, lodges, societies, clubs, etc. Finally the school system of the community was taken up; here the proportion of children attending school and the type of schools available were the chief questions involved.

3. *Survey of a Church.* The questions under this head were subdivided under thirteen divisions as follows: (1) General (locating the church, etc.); (2) Equipment; (3) Finance; (4) General Budget for this church last year; (5) Membership; (6) Occupation of Members; (7) Gain in last Fiscal Year; (8) Meetings; (9) The Parish; (10) Sunday school; (11) Other organizations; (12) Church Program; (13) The Minister. From the standpoint of this study the "Survey of a Church" was the most important of the three questionnaires, but it has not been described in detail at this point because it will be taken up later at greater length.

EVALUATION OF INTERCHURCH DATA

The method of collecting information developed by the Interchurch World Movement worked out very unevenly. In some cases the results are excellent, and in others worthless. In the main the procedure was dependent upon two factors: first, the ability of the state supervisor; and second, the efficiency of the county surveyor. But if only the well-surveyed material is considered, it is believed that the facts

secured by the Interchurch compare favorably with the best social data collected by governmental and other agencies. Of course, it is not as extensive as the statistics presented in the *Federal Census of Religious Bodies,* but it is far more intensive than the Government's figures.

This estimate of the general accuracy of the material was confirmed by "follow-up" conferences which were held in about thirty of the counties completely surveyed by the Interchurch World Movement. These were meetings at which a representative of the Movement presented the results of the survey to a group of ministers and laymen in the counties concerned. At these conferences it often happened that there were a few local inhabitants who objected to having a New York organization come in and tell them how to "run" their community. These men took special delight in trying to locate errors in the survey. This situation afforded an excellent check upon the original survey work, and abundantly confirmed the opinion that many of the studies were painstakingly accurate. In one county in Indiana where such a conference was held the only error which the local group could find was that one church which had had a resident pastor for years was not so recorded. In another case the sole criticism was that a church that was located on the left-hand side of the local stream was indicated on the survey map as being on the opposite bank. In a number of counties no criticisms of the findings were voiced at all.

In addition to the thirty counties that were checked back by follow-up conferences, Mr. Lamb, after the Movement was abandoned, conducted such conferences in every county in Ohio. He also testifies that the number of corrections called to his attention at these meetings was insignificant.

Another check upon the accuracy of the Interchurch data was the resurveying of twenty-six typical counties undertaken by this Institute of Social and Religious Research, which was then known as the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys. To salvage some of the results of the Interchurch, this organization decided to publish the survey results from certain typical counties. Thus, from among the hundreds of counties studied by the Movement, twenty-

six, widely scattered throughout the United States, were chosen for intensive restudy. All of these counties were selected in the belief that each was a fair specimen of the area of which it formed a part. In this way it was hoped that a representative cross section would be obtained of the religious situation as it exists in the rural sections of America.

To insure accuracy, each of the twenty-six counties previously studied by the Interchurch was resurveyed by a trained field worker of this Committee. This, again, afforded a check upon the general accuracy of the original material, and reaffirmed the substantial reliability of these surveys.

This huge body of detailed information about churches collected through the Interchurch World Movement, afforded an unusual opportunity for developing new methods of studying Protestantism. Never before has such an extensive body of church data been collected on so detailed and comparable a basis. In all, the Movement was instrumental in partly or completely surveying a thousand counties, while the number of individual churches ran into tens of thousands.

THE INTERCHURCH DATA UTILIZED

The purpose of this report, however, is not merely to summarize the Interchurch results. To a certain extent that has already been done in the final volume of the Town and Country Series which presents the facts discovered by the Interchurch in the twenty-six intensively surveyed counties as well as certain data for 153 other counties which were not resurveyed.[2] The main purpose of this report is, on the other hand, to discover and if possible to measure the tendencies at work in rural churches.

The first step in this study was to sort the Interchurch material. Before comparing churches individually or on a county basis it was necessary to select the well-surveyed questionnaires from the mass of data in the files of the

[2] See *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, Morse and Brunner, Doran, 1923.

Movement. This process was not easy; but it is believed that the information utilized in this report is unusually accurate for social data. Not only was the material limited to the surveys conducted by experienced investigators but also to those that gave internal evidence of a high degree of accuracy. Moreover, in the majority of cases the data has been rechecked either by follow-up conferences or by resurveys by professional investigators of this Institute.

Having selected the best-surveyed material, the next problem was to separate the questions of fact from those of opinion, for the Interchurch questionnaires included both. For example, they asked: "Do all the people of the community mingle together freely without class distinction?" and again: "Is the moral tone of this community improving?" Answers to questions of this sort depend so largely upon the viewpoint of the individual that they are of little value for comparative purposes. They have therefore been entirely excluded from this investigation.

In addition, a number of the questions were not of use in this particular study. For instance, the "Survey of a Church" asked: "Does this church have a horse shed?" As no conceivable use could be made of this inquiry in the present study, it was entirely neglected. In this way the questions about an individual church that were actually utilized in this report, either directly or indirectly, were greatly reduced in number. They are here reproduced in their original form:

SURVEY OF A CHURCH

State..... County..... Community.....
Location..... Denomination.....
When was church organized.....

Equipment

Value land $..... Church building $..... Parsonage $.....
Other building used for church or community purposes $.....
Equipment for social and recreational purposes: stereopticon.....
moving picture machine.....other.....

Finance

(a) Financial System

Budget for local expenses..... For all money raised.....
Weekly envelopes, single..... duplex..... Is every-member canvass according to approved standard made annually .....

(b) Expenditures and Receipts

Salary of minister $..... Denominational missions and benevolences $..... Other benevolences $..... Principal and interest of debts $..... New building or repairs $..... Other expenses $..... Total expenditures $..... Endowment $..... Total receipts $..... Surplus $..... Deficit $.....

(c) Home Mission Aid

Home Mission Aid received $..... How long received..... Total amount Home Mission Aid received during..... years $.....

Minister

Name..... Points served..... Distance this church from residence.....miles. Total cash salary from all churches $..... Church Boards $..... Parsonage free..... How long in this parish..... Graduate of what college..... Of what seminary..... Does he follow any other occupation than the ministry..... (If so what, and how much time is devoted to it).....

Membership

Roll (10 years ago)..... Total on present roll..... Non-resident..... Other non-active..... Net active members..... Total gain in year..... Total loss.....

Meetings

Number of preaching services per month:
Morning..... Afternoon..... Evening.....
Average attendance:
Morning..... Afternoon..... Evening.....
Mid-week prayer meeting.....

Sunday School

Enrollment..... Average attendance..... Number of months school is held..... Teacher Training Class, enrollment..... What provision for leadership training..... Is there a special class to prepare for church membership.....

Other Organizations

Name	Indicate for Men, Women, Boys, or Girls	Number of Members	Average Attendance	Meetings per Month
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Regarding the accuracy of the information gathered by these questions, there are undoubtedly errors, which vary not only with the ability of the investigator but with the type of question involved. For example, it is certain that the question, What is the denomination of this church?, is more accurately answered than the one that asks: What was the membership of this church ten years ago? It is relatively easy to determine the first point, while the second

usually involves more or less research. But a good deal of the information of this sort appears in published reports, and as far as possible these answers were checked from such sources.

Had this study been based upon its own field investigations, the set of questions asked would have been somewhat different; but in the circumstances no changes or alterations were possible. The group of questions employed is valuable because it shows the specific nature of our material. Most of the questions can be answered by "yes" or "no," or by a number. Each involves a concrete and objective reality. Moreover, these questions help to make it clear that the data, and therefore this study, deal entirely with the church as an institution and not with religion of the personal sort.

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PART I: MEASURING THE CHURCH

DIAGNOSING THE RURAL CHURCH

Chapter I

THE METHOD

The most immediate problem confronting modern civilizations is that of consciously adapting their social institutions to the needs of a world re-made. In a sense, adaptation of social institutions has been a problem throughout all time. Indeed, all that live must adapt or die. And at present, the need of social adaptation is peculiarly pressing. We live on a planet where conditions have been so changed by the scientific discoveries of the last few generations that it has become virtually a re-created world. Thus many of our older institutions, which were developed in a previous age under entirely different conditions, stand face to face with the immediate necessity of adjusting themselves radically to a new order. This is true not only of the home, the school, and the state, but of the church as well.

Virtually all classes admit there is need to modify our social institutions; but with this statement diversity begins. Most individuals are committed to a particular method of solving the difficulties. Socialists think they have the one and only key to our social puzzles. The Ku Klux Klan seems to be just as certain of its answers; and so it goes. Within the last century, however, the view has rapidly gained ground that the real hope of a satisfactory solution lies in the application of scientific methods to social affairs. At least, most thinking people have come to view with confidence this method of handling human problems.

Fundamentally the reason for optimism is found in the history of the natural sciences during the last century and a half. This period saw the first large-scale application of scientific methods to physical problems. As a result, scientists gained an insight into and a control over the material world far beyond the wildest dreams of early pioneers in these fields. To-day it is but natural for thoughtful men to ask themselves—Will not scientific methods of dealing with social problems yield equally valuable results? Should not exact analysis when applied to society give us the same insight into and control over human relationships that it has yielded in mechanics, physics and chemistry? Can we not look forward to the day when social science will make it possible for social engineers to deal with human problems with something like the same effectiveness as that with which mining or electrical engineers handle mechanical problems? This is the alluring hope held out by the social sciences.

Thus far the achievements of the so-called social sciences may not seem to justify these high hopes. Certainly there are as yet few social problems that have been solved by scientific methods. In part the sterility of these subjects can be explained by their extreme youth. Sociology and its brothers and sisters are among the youngest of the sciences. Fundamentally, however, criticism has been leveled not at their age—a science like an individual can hardly be blamed for its years—but at their methods. Up to the present, these have been so unscientific that men have seriously raised the question whether they can yet be dignified by the name of "science." The dean of American sociologists, Dr. Franklin H. Giddings, writing as recently as January, 1923, said:

> We who are called sociologists, or call ourselves such (I count myself in), have been sociologians and sociologizers; we are only beginning to be sociologists. The sociologian, like the theologian, builds up a system of thought by synthetic reflection. He does not discover and measure truth by the aid of instruments of precision, nor experimentally distill it. The sociologizer, like the moralizer, improves occasion by admonition and otherwise.[1]

[1] *The Literary Review*, January 27, 1923, p. 414.

Here then we have the heart of the difficulty. Sociologists have only begun to "measure truth by the aid of instruments of precision" and to "experimentally distill it." Instead of dispassionately discovering the facts as they exist in society, investigators have been building up philosophic systems about the world of human affairs. Instead of dealing with "what is," these men have been confining their attention to "what ought to be." Now it is true that "what ought to be" is important. Indeed, the conscious control of social phenomena is one of the goals of the social sciences. Nevertheless, before human beings can hope intelligently to change or to adapt their social relationships, they must learn precisely how social forces operate. First and foremost this involves a dispassionate analysis of the facts of social life without any reference to "right" or "wrong" or to systems of belief.

The problem of dissociating facts from preconceived theories is not peculiar to social science; it has confronted virtually all the sciences especially during their formative periods. Even so precise and objective a subject as astronomy was so tied up with theological dogmas during the Middle Ages that men like Galileo and Giordano Bruno were persecuted and even burned at the stake because they reported facts about the stars that were not in keeping with certain theories then current.

The social sciences, therefore, only find themselves in the same position as were the natural sciences of a few centuries ago when fact and philosophy were hopelessly confused. Just as the exact branches of knowledge had to disentangle facts from metaphysics before they could make rapid progress, so the would-be social scientist must free himself from modern pre-conceptions. But how is this liberation to be achieved? Here the experiences of the physical sciences should help us. How did they gain their present freedom? The answer is simple. Instead of fitting the facts of the world into certain man-made molds, they developed their laws and theories from the facts. This then is one of the most obvious and hopeful methods of procedure for social science. In addition to applying the

deductive process, let sociology apply the methods of induction that have proved so fruitful in physics, chemistry and biology.

LIMITATIONS OF "SOCIAL SCIENCE"

At the outset, however, it should be clearly recognized that there are such fundamental differences between social data and the material with which the physical scientist has to deal, that it is impossible to take over and apply directly to the social spheres the inductive methods which have proved so valuable in the exact sciences. For one thing, it is apparent that human beings cannot study themselves as dispassionately as they investigate the stars or an amœba. Our prejudices and emotions, our theories and dogmas are so tied up with the rest of our thinking that it is out of the question to expect a man to study his fellowmen entirely without bias. Nevertheless, we may hope that social scientists will develop far more intellectual detachment than has characterized their work thus far. Moreover, just as the astronomers have learned to correct for individual astigmatism when making observations through a telescope, so social scientists may learn to correct, in part at least, for the social blind spots of investigators. At best, however, the problem of eliminating the personal equation from social data is a difficult one.

Not only is it more difficult for human beings to observe themselves than to study physical phenomena, but the facts themselves are vastly more complex. For one thing, man has a mental apparatus that sets him apart from all other creatures. As a result, social "laws" cannot attain the same certainty as physical laws. In chemistry, for example, you know that hydrogen and oxygen, if combined under normal conditions in the proportion of two to one, invariably form water. In human affairs one cannot attain equal certainty because of the multiplicity of stimuli that can operate in any given situation. One man may react strongly to a system of religious instruction, while his neighbor may remain almost unaffected. Even the same man may react one way to-day and quite another way to-morrow.

The effect of this fundamental fact is to exclude the possibility of arriving at social laws in the hard and categorical definition of that word. In society there are no Newtonian laws of gravitation; that is to say, there are no social sequences or "laws" that are so simple and precise as are those in astral mechanics. Thus the social scientist must be satisfied with "laws" that are less rigid than those in the exact sciences. Because social sequences are necessarily less "absolute" than sequences in physics or chemistry, it seems wise to call them by a different name; such as "tendency" or "trend," [2] rather than "law."

Just as the aim of the exact sciences is to discover the laws that hold in the physical world, so the aim of the social sciences should be to discover the trends that operate in the human world. Now it is probably true that every event in the world is related to every other. It is, therefore, not enough to know that one event is connected with another. Rather it is necessary to find in what way and how closely they are interrelated. In other words, we wish to measure the degree of interrelationship. Fortunately the last generation has seen a remarkable development in the methods of measuring relationships of this sort. Karl Pearson and his school have worked out the necessary procedure so that to-day we have a precise measure of correlation.

THE AIM OF THIS INVESTIGATION

This book, which presents an analysis of several thousand churches located in rural areas, is an attempt to carry out a scientific investigation in accordance with this procedure. Its purpose is not simply to detail the facts about these churches, but rather to discover and to measure some of the tendencies in accordance with which the churches operate. The study uses the inductive method; it begins with facts as we find them. These researches, however, involve more than the

[2] The word "trend" is, therefore, employed throughout this report with a meaning quite different from its technical usage in connection with time series. Thus the term as used in this study should not be confused with its restricted use in such phrases as "secular trend," or "seasonal trend."

mere collection of data. From the standpoint of discovering physical or social "laws," facts in themselves are not the end but merely the beginning of wisdom; for the aim of scientific inquiry is insight and facts as such may not be enlightening. To illustrate—the Interchurch surveys brought to completion by this Institute show us that the contributions to rural churches fluctuate widely from one county to another. They tell, for instance, that each member in Orange County, California, gives on the average $37.00 annually to the support of his church, while those in Columbia County, Pennsylvania, give less than $11.00. This reveals the fact that the churches in the eastern county give one-third as much a member as those on the Pacific Coast, and is undoubtedly an interesting social fact, especially for church executives; but the question immediately arises: What does it mean? Does it mean that the people in Orange County take three times as much interest in their churches as do the people in Columbia County, or does it rather reflect the differences in the economic prosperity between the two areas? To answer these questions one must first measure the relationship between economic conditions and contributions to church. In other words, it is necessary to find the effect of prosperity and of poverty upon church donations. It is with interrelationships of this sort that this investigation deals.

It should be especially noted that this process does not necessarily involve a direct analysis of spiritual forces. Just as the physicist can deal with electricity without a clear appreciation of the energy with which he deals, so we can measure social and religious forces without clearly understanding them. This fact is particularly important for our present study, which deals with a comparative study of churches where spiritual elements and motives loom large. It is not essential that we fully understand these forces, it is enough that we study their effects.

This investigation, then, is an attempt to deal objectively and dispassionately with the church. Because of the wide variety of meanings connected with the word "church," it is necessary that its meaning be clearly defined. Throughout

this study the word means what the Federal Census includes under the term "local church organization" which it defines as "a gathering of individuals for religious services or worship . . . its essential feature is that its purpose is religious and its membership distinctive." [3] This book, therefore, attempts to compare different local churches in the same way that one might compare different local public schools. Thus the term "church" should not be confused with the word "denomination" or still less with such vague terms as "the church universal." In other words this comparative study deals strictly with institutional religion. Because of the nature of the Interchurch material available,[4] the investigation has been further limited to white Protestant churches operating in rural areas.

Fundamentally, the mission of a church is a spiritual one. Among its chief functions are the creation of a Christian attitude toward life, the spreading of brotherhood among mankind, and the development of human personality. This study does not deal directly with spiritual factors of this sort, however, for as yet no yardsticks have been evolved for measuring such intangibles. Estimating spiritual values is a subjective matter: results depend largely upon the viewpoint of the individual investigator.

In a scientific study of churches, it is therefore impossible to study directly their religious motives. One cannot deal at first hand with such intangibles as ideals and spiritual values; but they can be measured indirectly, for as Professor Thorndike has put it: "Our ideals may be as subtle as you please, but if they are real ideals, they strive for achievement, and if anything real is achieved, it can be measured." [5]

MONTHLY "ATTENDANCE INTEREST"

The measurable efforts of a church are many. There is the amount of money that the members contribute, which

[3] *Religious Bodies, 1916*, Vol. I, p. 24 (U. S. Bureau of the Census).
[4] See the Introduction for a description of the Interchurch material.
[5] E. L. Thorndike, Address at Indiana University Conference on Educational Measurements, April, 1914.

many have come to consider as the "acid test." [6] There is the proportion of people who belong to the churches, the type of program which the churches provide, and the number of new members that join the churches each year. This book deals with concrete "fruits" of this sort. But our study further introduces an additional basis of comparing churches, which requires a word of explanation. This new unit of comparison is *the amount of time that people contribute to their churches.* In certain respects this is a more accurate basis for comparing one church with another than money or membership. In the past, money contributions have been the comparative standard most often employed; but the amount of money that a person can contribute to his church depends, as we shall prove, upon the means at his disposal. These vary not only from individual to individual, but from locality to locality. On the other hand, each human being has the same twenty-four hours a day to invest in the activities of life, so the assumption that two men who devote ten hours a month to their church are equally interested in it is apt to be more nearly correct than is the hypothesis that two men who donate twenty-five dollars a year have the same interest. This assumption applies particularly in rural areas where there is not the same tendency as in cities for members to give money in lieu of time contributions to church.

The method of determining the monthly amount of time that a church commands is by *multiplying the average number of people who attend a given type of service by the number of such services held a month.* By adding together the totals for each type of service we arrive at the total number of services a month which the people devoted to that church. To avoid confusion in the use of terms, it has been decided to call this modified concept of attendance by the name "monthly attendance interest." Since there is a decided difference between attending a Sunday morning church service, going to Sunday school and being present at a straw-

[6] See *Money, the Acid Test;* D. McConaughy; Missionary Education Movement, 1918.

berry festival, the attendance interest that a church secures has been classified under three heads:

1. *Worship,* which includes the regular Sunday devotional services as well as those of mid-week.
2. *Sunday school,* which covers organized religious educational activities of the church, and
3. *Socio-religious,* which comprises all the other activities of the churches, such as those of the women's missionary society, the Christian Endeavor, Boy Scouts, etc., etc.

In considering this classification, it should be borne in mind that this study deals only with rural churches. Among these churches, worship and religious education are the major functions, while social and recreational activities play a very minor roll. Had our inquiry included city churches a different classification would undoubtedly have been necessary.

Using "attendance interest" as well as the older standards, such as contributions and membership ratios in comparing churches, the purpose of this report has been to discover and, where possible, to measure the tendencies that govern the rural church.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The study falls into three main divisions. Part I deals with methods of measuring churches. This section first takes up the older methods of measurement based on money and membership figures. Here our purpose is to discover the meaning of these standards for measuring churches. What is the significance of the fact that the members of one church give annually twenty dollars to its support, while those in another give only ten dollars? Does this signify that the first church secures twice as much interest from its members as the second? Next, we wish to raise the same questions about membership data. What does it mean that 60 per cent. of the people in one locality belong to church,

while in another only 6 per cent. are affiliated? Of course, these figures obviously indicate that there is a tenfold difference in the proportion of people who belong to church; but does it mean there is a tenfold difference in religious interest as judged by the amount of time that people devote to the church? Finally, this section attempts to build up a new unit for measuring churches based upon the amount of time or "monthly attendance interest" devoted to church.

This analysis, in Part I, of various methods of measuring churches is followed, in Part II, by an effort to correlate different groups of facts in order to discover some of the measurable tendencies that operate in the rural church field. This discussion falls under two main heads. First, we wish to know whether its *environment* affects a church and if so, how, and to what extent? In this part of the study our aim will be to ascertain the effect upon church life of such purely environmental factors as economic prosperity, density of population, regional characteristics, racial make-up of the people, illiteracy and occupation of the inhabitants. Secondly, what are some of the factors *within* the churches themselves that make for differences among the churches? For example, what, if any, are the effects of leadership and number of members upon other phases of a church's activities?

In Part III a final question remains to be considered. Is the country church as a social and religious institution stronger or weaker than it was a generation ago? This phase of our study affords an opportunity to contrast the various methods of measuring churches developed in Part I. How do the contributions of church members to-day compare with similar contributions of a generation ago? What about membership ratios? Are they as high now as in previous decades? Finally, as to attendance, do people go to church at present with the same regularity as formerly?

In the last chapter the findings of the investigation are briefly summarized and certain suggestions are made regarding future studies. Those interested primarily in conclusions rather than in the methods employed, are referred directly to that chapter.

Chapter II

THE MONEY MEASURE

The purpose of this study is to analyze different Protestant churches in order to discover and, if possible, to measure the strength of certain tendencies that operate in the field of the rural church. In other words, our aim is to discover the degree of interrelationship between different series of data. But before it is possible to correlate different sets of facts, units of weight and of measure must be evolved for measuring the facts themselves. Just as it is out of the question accurately to measure the length of any object without a unit of measure, so it is necessary to have precise "attendance interest" devoted to church.

In the past, a number of different standards of measurement have been evolved. The most important of these are (1) the amount of money that people contribute to church, (2) the number of persons that join or belong to church. The purpose of this part of our study is to evaluate these different units of measurement, and also to apply our new methods of measuring based upon the amount of time or "attendance interest" devoted to church.

Let us begin with the money measure. It has long been known that there are wide differences in the annual individual contributions of members not only from church to church, but from region to region, and it is often assumed that these variations are owing to differences in the religious interest of the members. People have the habit of judging churches by their contributions. A church that gives twenty-five dollars a member is held up as a shining example of Christian stewardship, while one that gives but a few dollars a year is felt to be religiously lukewarm. For instance, in

the report of one national denomination, all of its churches, no matter where located, that contribute more than a certain amount are printed in bold-faced type as a special mark of honor. It is our contention that just because one church has given more money than another is no proof that it has made greater sacrifices. It is the old story of the widow's mite. May not a contribution of five dollars a member coming from a poor county mean far more in terms of self-denial and church interest than twenty-five dollars a member from a church in a rich agricultural region? In other words are not differences in contributions between the two caused largely by differences in economic prosperity?

THE THIRTY-TWO TYPICAL COUNTIES

The first step in the endeavor to answer these inquiries was to select a group of widely scattered areas representing the various regions in America. As the basis of selection it was decided to begin with the twenty-six counties that had already been studied by this Institute and published in its *Town and Country Series*.[1] It will be recalled that these counties, which were picked from among the 1,000 surveyed by the Interchurch, were selected for resurvey by this organization because it was felt they would furnish "a bird's-eye view of the religious situation as it exists in the more rural areas of the United States."[2] Not only were they scattered widely throughout America, but all had been selected because "they were fair specimens of what was to be found throughout the area of which they were a part."[2] Moreover, each was well surveyed, having been resurveyed by a paid investigator of this Institute as well as by the Interchurch World Movement itself.

The only objection to these twenty-six counties for the purpose in hand was that their number was small. Roughly there are 3,000 rural counties in the United States lying outside of the environs of great cities. Had it been possible

[1] George H. Doran Company, 1923.
[2] *Irrigation and Religion;* Edmund deS. Brunner and Mary V. Brunner; p. 11.

it would have been desirable to base our investigation upon a 5 per cent. or a 10 per cent. sample. This was out of the question, for even though the Interchurch had completely surveyed several hundred counties, relatively few could be used in this study.

One of the main purposes of this investigation is to demonstrate the use of time contributions, or "attendance interest," as a means of measuring the place of the church among the people; but in order to determine the amount of time devoted to their churches monthly by the people of a county, it is necessary not only to know the average number of services a month, of each church in the county, but the average number of persons attending each type of service. Because of the extreme difficulty of obtaining information of this sort, very few counties except the original twenty-six could be used for this purpose. It was possible, nevertheless, to increase the number of counties available from twenty-six to thirty-two. In making the additions it was found that a better sample could be secured by eliminating two of the original counties and adding eight, rather than by adding six counties to the basic sample of twenty-six. It is felt that by and large these thirty-two counties are representative of the major regions of America. In detail they are as follows:

State	*County*
Ala.	Colbert
Cal.	Orange
	Stanislaus
Colo.	*Weld*
Ga.	Monroe
Idaho	*Gem*
Ind.	Jennings
Iowa	Clay
Kans.	Sedgwick
Md.	Harford
Mo.	Atchison
	Wayne
Mont.	Beaverhead
N. J.	Salem
N. Mex.	Union
N. Y.	Tompkins
N. C.	Durham
	Orange
Ohio	*Hardin*
	Miami
Ore.	*Benton*
Pa.	Columbia
S. D.	Hughes
Tenn.	Blount
Texas	Rockwall
Vt.	Addison
Wash.	Pend Oreille
	Skagit
W. Va.	*Raleigh*
Wis.	Price
	Sheboygan
Wyo.	Sheridan

The counties in italics are the ones that were added to the twenty-four "original" counties. It is believed these eight additional counties are nearly, if not quite, as well surveyed as the twenty-four. In Hardin, Miami, Skagit and Benton, the original survey results were checked through "follow up" [3] conferences, while the remaining four were not only surveyed by competent investigators but the survey results

MAP I—LOCATION OF THE 32 TYPICAL COUNTIES

gave internal evidence of a high degree of accuracy. The location of these counties is presented in Map I.

This sample of thirty-two counties scattered over twenty-six states includes a rural population of 644,148, or 1.2 per cent. of the town and country inhabitants of the United States. The counties have an area of 33,356 square miles, which is 1.1 per cent. of the area of the country. They included in their town and country areas at the time of the survey, 1,364 Protestant churches with 116,477 resident members. Assuming there are 102,000 rural Protestant churches in the United States, our thirty-two cases include

[3] See page XIV of Introduction for a description of these conferences.

1.3 per cent. of the total. These counties, therefore, form a very satisfactory statistical sample. Furthermore, it is believed that the method of selecting and the resurveying of the counties eliminated any tendency toward bias.

Using these thirty-two counties as the basis of evidence, our present problem is to find out the effect of economic conditions upon contributions to church. Does the economic prosperity of a region affect the money contributions of the Protestant churches located there? If so, how and to what extent? For example, do the members in poor counties give more in proportion to their means than do those in rich regions in proportion to theirs? These are our immediate problems.

For measuring the effect of wealth upon church contributions, our thirty-two counties form a very satisfactory basis of analysis, because they include rich areas as well as poor. Moreover, in every case the average contribution of church members for the fiscal year preceding the survey could be determined. The questionnaires of the Interchurch World Movement ascertained not only the total of the contributions to each church but the total active membership as well. By "active member" was meant "one who attends church or contributes regularly to its support." By dividing the total year's contributions by the total active membership, in a county's town and country area, we arrive at the average [4] individual contribution of active members in these areas. This is just the figure we need in the problem before us, because we are trying to find the extent to which economic conditions influence the contributions of members that *actually give money to the church.* Table I not only gives the average individual contributions of active members in the town and country area of these counties, but also summarizes in each case results for the town, village, and open country churches separately. According to the definitions used throughout this study, a "town" is a center with a population of from 2,501 to 5,000; a "village" is a place of from 251 to 2,500 inhabitants, while the "open

[4] Unless otherwise stated, the term "average" throughout this volume refers to the simple arithmetic "average."

TABLE I—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCHES IN 32 TYPICAL COUNTIES

		Town		Village		Open Country		Total	
State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*
Ala.	Colbert	4	$19.34	3	$39.96	35	$ 5.80	42	$15.04
Cal.	Orange	4	34.23	23	39.49	13	36.29	40	37.55
	Stanislaus	11	24.29	26	32.93	7	19.79	44	26.91
Colo.	Weld	..	....	28	15.72	26	27.33	54	19.00
Ga.	Monroe	4	15.22	6	9.82	37	5.14	47	8.00
Idaho	Gem	6	22.00	..	....	4	38.10	10	23.30
Ind.	Jennings	7	11.13	7	12.54	29	6.03	43	8.40
Iowa	Clay	9	23.98	11	25.63	13	39.42	33	26.78
Kans.	Sedgwick	..	....	24	23.27	29	27.21	53	24.70
Md.	Harford	5	24.94	15	25.46	54	13.54	74	17.92
Mo.	Atchison	5	58.38	12	20.20	19	23.92	36	33.01
	Wayne	..	....	16	17.12	46	8.28	62	11.78
Mont.	Beaverhead	3	23.24	2	50.17	1	3.75	6	23.73
N. J.	Salem	..	....	17	14.71	13	17.51	30	15.69

N. Mex.	Union	3	47.99	5	38.29	23	9.36	31	26.08
N. Y.	Tompkins	..	....	22	20.36	35	18.19	57	19.50
N. C.	Durham	..	....	2	22.81	34	6.09	36	7.27
	Orange	..	....	20	14.52	33	5.16	53	8.72
Ohio	Hardin	5	20.00	20	21.00	37	12.00	62	17.00
	Miami	..	....	24	19.07	35	12.20	59	16.23
Ore.	Benton	..	....	3	11.77	16	11.32	19	11.51
Pa.	Columbia	..	....	45	11.69	55	9.04	100	10.76
S. D.	Hughes	6	27.19	5	29.85	4	52.87	15	28.71
Tenn.	Blount	..	....	6	7.53	73	10.63	79	10.38
Texas	Rockwall	..	....	9	15.73	14	26.06	23	18.36
Vt.	Addison	..	....	13	17.03	27	18.12	40	17.45
Wash.	Pend Oreille	..	....	5	24.23	2	36.53	7	24.99
	Skagit	12	27.00	13	29.00	15	24.00	40	26.73
W. Va.	Raleigh	6	32.17	21	15.71	36	4.39	63	14.52
Wis.	Price	7	21.85	11	14.05	12	8.38	30	15.73
	Sheboygan	5	11.22	23	16.04	31	10.84	59	12.60
Wyo.	Sheridan	9	23.89	2	1.84	6	22.26	17	22.34

country" comprises the farming area proper and all hamlets of 250 persons or less.[5]

MEASURING RURAL PROSPERITY

Having worked out for each of the thirty-two counties the average individual contribution of the members, we wish next to see how these contributions correlate with the economic prosperity of the areas in which the churches are located. Do the contributions tend to be low in the poor counties and high in the richer ones? Before we can attack this problem concretely we must arrive at some basis for comparing the economic conditions in one county with those of another. In other words, we need an index of the economic prosperity of each county.

If we were dealing with the urban as well as the rural areas of these counties, our index of prosperity would have to take into consideration not only the income derived from agriculture but the value added by the county's factories, its mines, and other sources of wealth. Manufacturing, for instance, is an important phase of the economic life of some of these counties. In Durham County, North Carolina, "the value added by manufacture" as given by the Federal Census of 1920 was forty-two million dollars; while in Salem, New Jersey, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin, this sum was slightly in excess of twenty millions. Incomes from manufacturing, therefore, would have to be included when comparing the *total prosperity* of one county with that of another. Our studies, however, include only the town and country areas of these counties, or in other words the population centers of 5,000 or less. In localities so sparsely settled as this, manufacturing is far less important than in the county as a whole, while agriculture is relatively much more important. This is just another way of stating the well-known fact that agriculture is limited very generally to rural areas, while manufacturing is largely confined to towns and cities. For carrying on industrial enterprises as

[5] On the advice of some of the Institute's field workers several minor exceptions were made to these rulings.

we know them to-day, large aggregates of people are essential. Thus it happens that in rural regions there are few industries except stone quarries, small saw mills and the like. In the population areas of less than 5,000, agriculture is the main source of income. Certainly this is true in "open country" communities that have no hamlets of more than 250 persons. Thus it becomes obvious that if we could arrive at a figure showing the agricultural prosperity of each of our counties, it would be legitimate to use it as an index of the prosperity of at least the *open country* parts of these counties. We would, then, be justified in correlating this index for each county with the figures we have already found showing the average individual contribution of the members of open country churches.

Fortunately the United States Census furnishes figures showing the average value of farms in each of the counties in the United States. This is just the sort of an index of prosperity we have been looking for. The average value of farms is based not only upon the actual productivity of the soil, but upon the facilities for marketing the products raised and upon the general standard of living throughout the area. Moreover, as farm values are expressed in terms of dollars, they reflect differences in the purchasing power of money from one section to another.[6] The average value of all farm property in the counties we are studying as given by the Census of 1920 is summarized in Table II.

We now have the average contribution of the individual members of open country churches as well as average farm values in each of our typical counties. Moreover, the two sets of data are quite comparable in time. Both the Interchurch studies and the Census information were secured around the early part of 1920. This fact is especially important because of the rapid deflation in farm values that occurred during the recent agricultural depression.

Using farm values as our index of economic prosperity, what do we find is its relationship to the average individual

[6] This study used as the index of prosperity the average value of the entire farm rather than other available indices such as the value of the farm "per acre," because the income of a farm is really determined by the productivity of the farm as a unit.

TABLE II—AVERAGE VALUE OF ALL FARM PROPERTY IN THE 32 TYPICAL COUNTIES

According to the Federal Census of 1920

State	*County*	*No. of Farms*	*Total Value of Farms*	*Average Farm Value*
Ala.	Colbert	3,018	$ 11,477,600	$ 3,803
Cal.	Orange	4,188	176,663,249	42,183
	Stanislaus	4,566	110,595,497	24,222
Colo.	Weld	5,765	134,878,433	23,396
Ga.	Monroe	2,958	10,852,428	3,669
Idaho	Gem	770	12,418,893	16,128
Ind.	Jennings	2,023	15,504,090	7,664
Iowa	Clay	1,769	93,374,109	52,784
Kans.	Sedgwick	3,347	77,284,488	23,091
Md.	Harford	2,399	26,898,797	11,213
Mo.	Atchison	1,541	69,486,841	45,092
	Wayne	1,676	8,609,361	5,137
Mont.	Beaverhead	642	26,426,581	41,163
N. J.	Salem	1,802	17,894,679	9,930
N. Mex.	Union	2,652	37,331,169	14,077
N. Y.	Tompkins	2,550	20,681,178	8,110
N. C.	Durham	1,769	6,953,397	3,931
	Orange	2,183	8,325,970	3,814
Ohio	Hardin	3,052	47,819,993	15,668
	Miami	3,260	49,577,641	15,208
Ore.	Benton	1320	18,249,852	13,826
Pa.	Columbia	2,603	15,555,011	5,976
S. D.	Hughes	363	12,708,030	35,008
Tenn.	Blount	2,601	16,620,560	6,390
Texas	Rockwall	1,075	19,055,149	17,726
Vt.	Addison	2,375	23,245,120	9,787
Wash.	Pend Oreille	586	4,205,130	7,176
	Skagit	2,401	30,144,706	12,555
W. Va.	Raleigh	1,578	6,769,514	4,290
Wis.	Price	1,935	9,584,983	4,953
	Sheboygan	3,664	63,348,843	17,290
Wyo.	Sheridan	972	21,986,427	22,620

contribution of members of open country churches? Do contributions tend to be high where farm values are high, and to be low where farm values are low?

Let us begin by grouping the counties according to the average contributions of the individual members. In the first group we will put those counties in which the contribution is less than five dollars a year, in the second those in which it is between five and ten dollars, in the third those in which the individual members contribute an average of be-

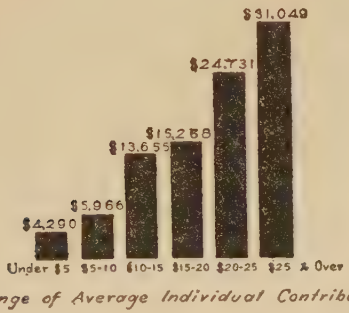

CHART I—RELATION BETWEEN AVERAGE FARM VALUES AND AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCH MEMBERS IN 28 OF THE 32 COUNTIES

tween ten and fifteen dollars, and so on. Before actually computing the average for each group, it was thought best to eliminate four of the counties because of the small number of open country churches in each. Beaverhead, Montana, had only one church of this kind, and Pend Oreille, Washington, but two; while Gem, Idaho, and Hughes, South Dakota, had only four each. Having excluded these counties from the computation because it was obviously unfair to base an average upon so small a number of cases, we calculated the average value of farms in each group of counties. Results are shown graphically in Chart I, and indicate a very decided tendency for the average contribution of individual members to increase as the wealth of the counties increases.

THE MEANING OF CORRELATION

In determining the relationship between farm values and the average contributions of open country members the Pearsonian coefficient will help to make the degree of interrelationship more precise. This is simply a mathematical device for showing how strong is the tendency for variations in one set of factors to be accompanied by comparable variations in another. In the case before us we wish to ascertain how closely variations in per capita contributions correlate with variations in farm values. According to the Pearsonian method, if the two tendencies were identical, i.e., if known changes in farm values were always accompanied by corresponding proportionate changes in per capita contributions, then the Pearsonian coefficient of correlation would be $\pm$ 1.00. Of course, in social data it almost never happens that one discovers perfect correlation, and therefore for all practical purposes "1.00" becomes an unattainable ideal. The coefficient of correlation, however, does tell how closely changes in the two sets of factors approach this "ideal" of perfect correlation. There is no need here to go into the actual mathematics. Interested readers are referred to Elderton's *Primer of Statistics* for an elementary discussion of the problem, and to Harold O. Rugg's *Statistical Methods Applied to Education* for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject.

As to the significance of the different coefficients, they can be best indicated by quoting from *Judging Human Character,* by H. L. Hollingworth:

> . . . Mathematical treatment of the figures can be made to yield coefficients of similarity . . . Purely chance agreement will on this basis yield a coefficient of .00. Complete agreement will give a coefficient of +1.00, and completely reversed arrangements will give −1.00. The various degrees of similarity or difference will give coefficients ranging anywhere from +1.00 through .00 to −1.00. Thus a coefficient of +.50 would represent resemblance of two series part way between perfect similarity and purely chance agreement. These measures may be given a more concrete meaning by reference to the resemblance of people. Children of the same family resemble each other in physical appearance more than do children chosen at random.

And twins resemble each other still more closely than do brothers or sisters who are not twins. Studies have been made in which children have been measured in various physical characteristics, and the degree of resemblance stated in just such coefficients of similarity as those we have described. When this is done it is found that children of the same family give coefficients of resemblance of about +.40. Twins, however, give coefficients of about +.80. We may then say, by way of concrete illustration, that judgments that agree with each other by a coefficient of .40 are as similar as children of the same family, while judgments that give coefficients of similarity as great as .80 are as alike as twins. . . .

Having determined the meaning of the Pearsonian coefficient of correlation, we are now in a position to use it in working out the degree of relationship between average farm values and per capita contributions to church. Before actually correlating, let us again throw out the four counties having fewer than five open country churches each.[7] If per capita contributions and farm values are correlated on this basis, the coefficient is +.85 with a probable error of ±.04, which is very close to our ideal of "1.00." Even for such a small group of counties, this is a very high degree of relationship and indicates that there is a decided tendency for the average contributions of Protestant church members to be high in those counties in which farm values are high and low where the average value of farms is low. The implication is that economic conditions tend decidedly to be reflected in the contributions of members to their church.

ESTIMATING FARM INCOMES

Farm values, however, are not the only available index of the agricultural prosperity of a county. From Census data it is also possible to work out the average farm income for each county. Now, if our contention be correct that contributions tend to be high in the wealthy counties and low in the poorer ones, then certainly average contributions of

[7] This rule of eliminating all counties with fewer than five churches upon which to base an average has been followed in all the other correlations throughout this report.

members to church should be high where average farm incomes are high, and vice versa. Let us see. The 1920 Federal Census furnishes for the previous year not only the total value of the crops raised county by county, and state by state, and the number and value of animal products, but the main farm expenses of these areas as well. Basing its estimates upon these figures, the National Bureau of Economic Research, through Dr. Oswald W. Knauth, worked out a method of computing the average farm income by states. After consultation with Dr. Knauth, it was decided that essentially this same method could be used to ascertain the average income of farms in each of our thirty-two counties.

It is not necessary to go into an elaborate discussion of this method. Interested readers are referred to Dr. Knauth's monograph, *Distribution of Income by States.*[8] It is necessary to say only that the value of the crops raised is taken as the basis of the farmer's income because for the country as a whole, crops represent about nine-tenths of the value-product of farms. These figures are furnished by the Census for each county as well as for states. To the value of these crops has been added the value of (1) animals slaughtered and (2) animal products over and above the value of crops fed to animals. From this gross income the chief expenses of operating the farms have been subtracted. These items, which are supplied by the Census, include the cost to the farmers of (1) feed, (2) fertilizer, (3) labor and (4) interest on mortgages. A 10 per cent. maintenance charge computed from the value of buildings and equipment as given by the Census has also been included as an operating expense. These expenses have next been subtracted from the gross income, leaving the net farm income for each county. This net income has then been divided by the number of farms in the county giving the average income of the farms.

This essentially is the Knauth method of estimating farm incomes, and as far as it goes it is the one that has been

[8] See *Distribution of Income by States in 1919,* Knauth; Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922.

employed in this study. Necessarily, of course, we have used county figures, whereas he used state totals. However, our method includes in addition a step that Dr. Knauth did not employ. In every case we have subtracted $500 from the average total farm income of each county as worked out by the Knauth method. This additional step has been taken because it is believed that if $500 is subtracted the result will more nearly represent the amount of money the farmer actually received; because farm incomes, according to the procedure developed by Dr. Knauth, include not only the cash that the farmers receive from the sale of their products, but also the value of the food, fuel and rent of house which the farm affords.

According to *Department Bulletin 410* of the Department of Agriculture, a study of 950 families in 1913-1914 showed that these items averaged $424. Of this sum, $292 represented the value of food and fuel, while the remaining $132 was allocated to shelter. Moreover, in a survey of over 6,000 farms, recently made by the United States Department of Agriculture to determine the average farm returns to owner operators for the year 1922,[9] it was found that the value of food and fuel produced and used on the farm was $294, which corresponds almost exactly to the 1913-1914 figure. Because living costs were somewhat higher in 1919 than in 1913-1914 or in 1922, an estimate of $500 for these three items in that year is not unreasonable. Since this procedure subtracts the same amount, $500, from the average farm incomes of all counties alike, it may be well to show here that the value of these items apparently does not vary from region to region.

If it could be shown that the total value of the food and fuel consumed and the rental value of the farm increased in amount as the counties became increasingly wealthy, then certainly it would be unfair to deduct $500 from both poor and rich counties. The Government reports already referred to, do not, however, indicate such a tendency. For example, the 1922 study, which showed that the value of the food and fuel produced on 6,094 farms averaged $294

[9] See *Weather, Crops, and Markets,* April 28, 1923, p. 396.

for the United States as a whole, showed also that there were no considerable regional differences in this average. In the North Atlantic states [10] the average for 648 farms was $273; in the East North Central region it averaged $276 for 1,274 farms. The 1,395 farms investigated in the West North Central region gave an average for these items of $287; in the Western group of states, it was $269 based upon 692 cases, and $301 for the 1,282 farms in the South Central area. All of these averages are within 10 per cent. of the average for the country as a whole. Indeed, it was only in the South Atlantic region that the value of these items showed any considerable variation from the national average and here this average was *high* rather than low, being $362 for 803 cases. This is just the reverse of the tendency we would expect to find if these items tended to increase with increasing prosperity, for in the South Atlantic region farm values are low compared with values in other regions. This curious situation can probably be explained by the fact that the poorer the farming community the less food farmers can afford to purchase and therefore the more they will consume from their own gardens. Of course, the figures just presented do not include the rental value of the farm home; but even assuming that the estimated amount for this item would be higher in rich than in poor regions, it would hardly more than compensate for the tendency just indicated, especially as the rental value of the farm is only about one-third of the total value of the three items. In the light of this data, $500 does not appear to be an unreasonable amount to subtract from the average estimated farm income of each county. Certainly it seems better to subtract this amount than to make no allowance at all for these items, especially as the resulting figure more nearly represents the fund from which contributions to church must be drawn. To prevent confusion, the term "average cash income" has been applied to this revised figure.

The average cash incomes for our thirty-two counties are given in Table III. As Dr. Knauth himself states: "The amounts shown, then, are not put forward as exact, they are

[10] The regions here used are the ones employed by the Census.

TABLE III—AVERAGE CASH INCOME OF FARMS IN THE 32 TYPICAL COUNTIES

State	*County*	*Average Cash Income*
Ala.	Colbert	$ 968
Cal.	Orange	3,542
	Stanislaus	2,376
Colo.	Weld	2,150
Ga.	Monroe	853
Idaho	Gem	2,220
Ind.	Jennings	741
Iowa	Clay	3,610
Kans.	Sedgwick	2,175
Md.	Harford	768
Mo.	Atchison	4,209
	Wayne	374
Mont.	Beaverhead	4,657
N. J.	Salem	1,181
N. Mex.	Union	1,829
N. Y.	Tompkins	932
N. C.	Durham	519
	Orange	628
Ohio	Hardin	2,410
	Miami	1,894
Ore.	Benton	1,112
Pa.	Columbia	1,383
S. D.	Hughes	1,869
Tenn.	Blount	595
Texas	Rockwall	1,663
Vt.	Addison	896
Wash.	Pend Oreille	—149 *
	Skagit	1,941
W. Va.	Raleigh	173
Wis.	Price	196
	Sheboygan	950
Wyo.	Sheridan	800

*—indicates a deficit.

rather working estimates."[11] However, as all have been worked out on exactly the same basis, it is believed they show with a reasonable degree of accuracy *relative* differences in the farm incomes from county to county.

If now we compare the "average cash income" for each county with the average contribution of the active members of the open country churches, what do we find? Let us again begin by eliminating the counties with less than five open country churches upon which to base an average, and

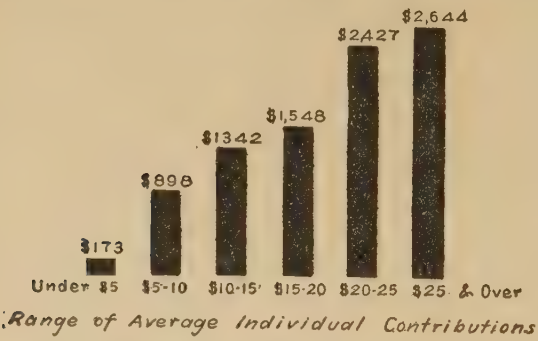

CHART II—RELATION BETWEEN AVERAGE CASH INCOMES OF FARMS AND AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCH MEMBERS IN 28 OF THE 32 COUNTIES

then group our counties according to the average amount of money contributed by individual members. In the first group we will put those counties in which the contribution is less than five dollars; in the second, those in which it is from five to ten dollars, etc. Then what about the "average cash income" of farms in each of these groups of counties? The answer is given graphically in Chart II, and shows that in the one-to-five dollar group the average income of the farms is but $173; but that this figure tends to increase steadily until, in the group of counties in which the average contribution of members is twenty-five dollars or

[11] *Distribution of Incomes by States;* Knauth; p. 19; Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922.

more, it is $2,644 a farm. As worked out by the Pearsonian method, the correlation is $+.76 \pm .06$, which is a high and significant coefficient.

Thus far it has been shown that there is a marked tendency in the twenty-eight of our thirty-two counties that have five or more open country churches each, for per capita contributions to be high where farm values or farm incomes are high, and vice versa. Moreover, since our counties, which are scattered over the major regions of the United States, were selected "because they were fair specimens of what was to be found throughout the area of which they are a part" the probabilities are that this tendency applies to wider areas than the ones here considered.

CHECKING RESULTS IN 64 COUNTIES

As a check on this point, a second group of sixty-four counties was selected for intensive study. These counties were secured from the 193 completely surveyed and tabulated by the Interchurch World Movement. At first it may seem strange that only one-third of the available counties were utilized in our checking sample; however, a process of weeding-out was absolutely necessary. For example, thirty-two had to be thrown out because they had already been used in our first sample. This left but 161 from which to choose. Of these, twenty-six were excluded because the information was not sufficiently complete for our purpose. Two counties from Louisiana and seventeen from Utah were also dropped because of the high percentage of Roman Catholics in the former and the large number of Mormons in the latter, while six counties were excluded because they had a large transient summer population, which meant that the contributions in these churches would probably be unduly increased by the donations of vacationists. In this and similar ways the number of counties actually available was reduced from 193 to 98. But even this group could not be used in its entirety because, as it happened, its distribution gave undue weight to certain states, notably Ohio and Georgia. Map II shows the distribution of the sixty-four coun-

ties actually utilized in our checking sample. They include a town and country population of 1,026,997 or 1.8 per cent. of the total town and country population of the United States. Table IV lists the sixty-four counties and gives both their average farm values and average cash incomes, as well as the average contributions of individual members in open country churches.

If now we correlate the average farm value in each of these sixty-four counties with the average contribution of

MAP II—LOCATION OF THE 64 REPRESENTATIVE COUNTIES

the active members of open country churches, what is the result? For the fifty-one counties with five or more churches the coefficient of correlation is $+.67 \pm .05$. In other words, here again we find a decided tendency for per capita contributions to be high where farm values are high and low where farm values are low. If farm incomes are used as the "index of prosperity" instead of farm values, the coefficient tells substantially the same story. The actual figure is $+.59 \pm .06$.

As a final test, the two samples, the original thirty-two and the secondary sixty-four, were combined and the correlation coefficient worked out for the total number of counties.

TABLE IV—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES, AVERAGE CASH INCOMES, AND AVERAGE FARM VALUES, IN 64 REPRESENTATIVE COUNTIES

State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*Average Cash Incomes*	*Average Farm Values*
Ark.	Montgomery	49	$ 3.05	$ 551	$ 2,715
Cal.	Kern	7	38.56	1,402	38,077
	Santa Clara	2	30.00	2,164	29,879
Conn.	Middlesex	12	17.38	—69	7,382
Fla.	Madison	31	4.38	404	3,283
	Osceola	3	14.53	599	11,020
	Pasco	13	8.60	—14	6,058
Ga.	Bibb	11	5.50	676	5,650
	Clayton	11	5.73	1,117	4,968
	Columbia	17	5.74	997	3,367
	Dawson	15	1.88	761	2,719
	Echols	9	2.96	—345	3,678
	Floyd	41	4.25	1,218	4,045
	Montgomery	18	3.12	718	4,517
	Paulding	33	2.39	959	2,828
	Telfair	26	4.43	386	4,328
	Webster	7	4.86	447	3,032
	White	25	2.06	296	3,343
Ida.	Kootenai	12	10.23	501	8,847
	Twin Falls	6	24.99	3,788	27,085
	Washington	2	11.77	1,637	13,643
Ill.	Champaign	28	18.30	4,949	63,742
Ind.	Tippecanoe	25	13.42	2,517	25,356
Iowa	Keokuk	26	14.45	2,300	32,481
Mich.	Antrim	16	17.35	1,087	5,061
Miss.	Pearl River	25	2.85	486	3,959
Mont.	Chouteau	10	14.91	—1,117	16,326
	Gallatin	5	20.19	1,526	31,769
N. J.	Mercer	8	10.76	1,873	13,087
N. Mex.	Grant	1	16.00	1,539	16,001
	Torrance	7	7.66	789	6,566
N. Dak.	Nelson	11	17.00	4,488	30,092

TABLE IV—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES, AVERAGE CASH INCOMES, AND AVERAGE FARM VALUES, IN 64 REPRESENTATIVE COUNTIES—*Continued*

State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*Average Cash Incomes*	*Average Farm Values*
Ohio	Coshocton	60	7.79	1,229	7,475
	Crawford	41	10.08	2,058	14,215
	Fayette	30	12,69	3,644	29,092
	Fulton	36	12.54	1,638	15,148
	Henry	37	14.93	2,402	19,357
	Holmes	29	11.18	1,628	10,471
	Summit	29	15.94	643	17,062
	Wyandot	30	12.64	2,385	16,993
Okla.	Oklahoma	6	8.73	1,386	10,016
Ore.	Crook	3	4.01	794	22,136
	Lane	25	9.74	792	10,872
Pa.	Forest	17	7.64	304	4,412
	Northampton	55	8.77	893	8,120
S. D.	Jackson	4	36.67	1,165	21,484
	Kingsbury	7	23.25	3,981	47,293
Tenn.	Dickson	24	2.91	567	3,307
	Johnson	43	5.17	379	5,029
Texas	Gonzales	20	7.32	424	7,416
	Hemphill	3	9.38	7,003	45,618
	La Salle	3	36.88	5,296	36,373
	Nueces	7	16.18	2,443	20,746
	Pecos	0	....	8,364	90,288
	Sterling	0	....	3,901	49,626
	Zavalla	1	23.57	4,236	41,022
Vt.	Franklin	15	14.29	991	10,707
	Lamoille	8	13.44	508	6,586
Wash.	Benton	7	24.79	2,357	13,916
	Chelan	15	31.16	4,396	17,923
Wis.	Columbia	19	22.88	2,061	17,140
Wyo.	Big Horn	5	25.46	3,169	16,999
	Converse	4	7.41	1,414	20,195
	Platte	4	19.38	1,173	27,268

On this basis it was possible to correlate farm values and average contributions of active members in seventy-nine counties, each of which had five or more open country churches. In this case the coefficient was $+.74 \pm .03$, while with farm incomes it was $+.62 \pm .05$. Considering the large number of cases involved, these are high correlation measures. Since farm incomes and farm values are fairly reliable indices of the economic prosperity of open country areas, the hypothesis is justified that variations in the contributions of open country church members from place to place are owing primarily to differences in the economic conditions of the localities in which the churches are located.

The tendency here revealed is important because it shows that the church in its financial life is closely dependent upon economic conditions; and it means, unless the churches have equally prosperous members, that as between one church and another there is no ground whatever for the conclusion that differences in the average contributions of members indicate differences in religious interest. The mere fact that on the average the members of a church in one locality contribute only four dollars a year, while those in another give forty dollars, tells nothing about church interest until we know the relative prosperity of the two places. On this basis the four dollar contributions may mean as much in proportion to the wealth of the community as forty dollars mean somewhere else. Indeed, if one of the areas were a backward county in the southern mountains while the other was a rich irrigated county on the Pacific Coast, the four dollars may actually represent far more in proportion to the means at the disposal of the people than do the forty dollars. This is an extreme example, but it makes clear the point. Per capita contributions to church clearly reflect the economic prosperity of the area in which the churches are located, and therefore, they should be employed as a direct index of religious interest only when the churches considered have equally prosperous members.

Chapter III

THE MONEY MEASURE (*Continued*)

In the last chapter it was shown that the average contributions of individual members in open country churches tend to increase with the economic prosperity of the areas in which they are located. Up to the present, however, it has been proved only that the open country members in rich counties tend to give more money per capita to their churches than do those in poor areas. The next problem is to ascertain what these contributions mean, not merely in terms of dollars and cents but in relation to the means at the disposal of the people. Do church members in wealthy areas give a larger or smaller proportion of their wealth to the church than members in less prosperous localities? In other words, do the relatively small contributions of open country members in very poor counties represent greater or less sacrifices in relation to the means at their disposal than the larger donations of the members in comparatively rich counties represent in proportion to their means?

CONTRIBUTIONS AND FARM VALUES

It has already been indicated that average farm values, as given by the Federal Census, are a fairly reliable index of the relative prosperity of open country areas. If, then, we think of the average individual contribution of members of open country churches as a percentage of the average value of farms in the counties in which the churches are located, what do we find? In seeking to answer this question let us again turn to our ninety-six counties. This time we will begin by grouping them according to their farm values. In the first group we will put all the counties whose farm values average less than $10,000; in the second those whose values

are from $10,000 to $20,000; in the third those averaging from $20,000 to $30,000 in value, etc. The two counties having no open country churches will naturally have to be excluded. Then let us work out the average contribution of members for each of our groups. Results are shown in Table V.

This table shows that the group of poorest counties, whose farms average less than $10,000 in value, contributed $7.00 a member; but that the contributions become larger as farm values increase, until in the group of richest counties, whose farm values average more than $50,000, church

TABLE V—RATIO OF AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES TO AVERAGE FARM VALUES IN 94 OF THE 96 COUNTIES

Farm-Value Groups	*No. of Counties*	*(a) Average Contributions*	*(b) Average Farm Values*	*Ratio of (a) to (b)*
Less than $10,000.....	40	$ 7.00	$ 5,532	.127%
$10,000 to 20,000.....	27	13.38	14,640	.091
20,000 to 30,000.....	13	20.12	25,228	.080
30,000 to 40,000.....	6	17.74	34,079	.052
40,000 to 50,000.....	6	26.70	43,687	.061
50,000 and over.....	2	22.35	60,175	.037

members contribute $22.35 each. These figures confirm the conclusions already reached that there is a decided tendency for per capita contributions to increase as farm values increase. But the most interesting part of this table is the varying ratio between individual contributions and farm values in the different groups of counties. If we think of the average contributions of members as a percentage of the average value of the farms, we find that in the group of poorest counties the contribution is .127 per cent. of the farm value, while in the ten to twenty thousand group it is .091 per cent., and that this percentage decreases rapidly until in the richest counties it is only .037. In other words, the greater the farm values the less the contributions of members bulk in proportion to the wealth of the area.

There may be objections to this conclusion on the ground that average farm values, especially in our group of least prosperous counties, are not a good index of the economic prosperity of the *white* church members living there. Many of these counties, it may be urged, are located in the South where Negro farmers comprise an appreciable percentage of the farm population. On the average, farms owned or operated by Negroes are less valuable than those of white farmers and therefore it may be asserted that our index tends to underestimate the prosperity of the white farmers in our lowest farm-value group, or to overestimate, in other words, the proportionate sacrifices involved in the contributions that the white church members in these counties make to their churches. Now the easiest way to have forestalled this criticism would have been to use as the index of prosperity the average value of the farms of white owners or operators rather than the value of all farms. Unfortunately the Government does not publish farm-value data for white farmers or Negro farmers separately. As a courtesy, however, the Census Bureau furnished this Institute with a special computation showing the average value of lands and buildings of the white farmers in the fourteen of our ninety-six counties having the largest proportion of Negro farmers. Had it been possible, it would have been desirable to secure this data for "all farm property" rather than for "lands and buildings" only, since the former is the index we have been using as our yardstick of prosperity. Such figures were not available, but as the value of lands and the value of buildings together comprise the major items included in the value of "all property," the special data compiled by the Census do afford a very reliable indication of the relative difference in these counties between the average value of all farms which is the index of prosperity we have been using, and the average value of the farms of white farmers alone. The figures themselves are given in Table VI.

This table shows that in every case the value of the farms of white farmers is somewhat higher than the average for all farms in the county. But the differences between the

two sets of figures are not very great, being on the average 22 per cent.

From these figures we are now in a position to estimate with a high degree of accuracy the average value of all the farm property of white farmers in each of these counties. If,

TABLE VI—AVERAGE VALUE OF FARMS (LAND AND BUILDINGS) OWNED OR OPERATED BY WHITE FARMERS COMPARED WITH THE AVERAGE VALUE OF ALL FARMS IN CERTAIN OF THE 96 COUNTIES HAVING OVER 10 PER CENT. NEGRO FARMERS

		All Farmers		*Farms of White Farmers*	
State	*County*	*Number*	*Average Value*	*Number*	*Average Value*
Ala.	Colbert	3,018	$3,132	1,945	$3,363
Fla.	Madison	1,749	2,534	1,021	3,539
Ga.	Bibb	1,457	4,796	704	7,526
	Clayton	1,777	4,336	974	5,066
	Columbia	1,914	2,794	695	4,208
	Floyd	3,516	3,281	2,704	3,674
	Monroe	2,958	3,076	1,083	4,920
	Montgomery	1,315	3,793	701	4,984
	Paulding	2,467	2,303	2,203	2,332
	Telfair	1,897	3,517	1,386	4,006
	Webster	838	2,447	370	3,644
N. C.	Durham	1,769	3,411	1,221	3,926
	Orange	2,183	3,170	1,568	3,671
Texas	Gonzales	4,361	6,236	3,259	7,285
Weighted Average for 14 Counties			$3,655		$4,457

then, for the counties having more than 10 per cent. of their farms held by Negroes, we substitute in place of the average value of all farms, the estimated average value of farms owned or operated by white farmers, we find that the average farm value in our lowest group of counties in Table V rises from $5,532 to $6,176. On this basis the ratio of average contributions of active members to average farm values drops from .127 per cent. to .113. These figures, however, do not change the downward trend shown in Table V; and

since this procedure almost entirely eliminates differences in farm values traceable to the presence or absence of Negro-farmers, we are justified in reaffirming that the richer the area the less the contributions to church bulk in proportion to the means at the disposal of the people.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND CASH INCOMES

So that we may still further check this conclusion, let us use, as our measure of prosperity, average cash income rather than farm value. Again we will begin by grouping

TABLE VII—RATIO OF AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES TO AVERAGE CASH INCOMES IN 94 OF THE 96 COUNTIES

Cash-Income Groups	*No. of Counties*	*(a) Average Contributions*	*(b) Average Cash Incomes*	*Ratio of (a) to (b)*
Less than $ 750.....	28	$ 6.41	$ 144	4.45%
$ 750 to 1,500.....	27	9.30	863	1.08
1,500 to 2,250.....	17	15.64	1,948	.80
2,250 to 3,000.....	8	14.19	2,395	.59
3,000 to 3,750.....	4	24.82	3,534	.70
3,750 to 4,500.....	6	23.60	4,127	.57
4,500 and over	4	18.40	5,069	.36

the ninety-four of our ninety-six counties that have open country churches in order to see how the ratio of contributions to incomes changes as the wealth of the counties increases. Results are shown in Table VII.

These figures show that in the twenty-eight counties whose estimated average farm income is less than $750, cash incomes average $144; while the average contribution of members to the open country churches is $6.41. This means that individual contributions to church represent almost 4.5 per cent. of the estimated cash incomes. But with increasing wealth this proportion falls rapidly until in the richest counties the average contribution is but $18.40, compared with an average cash income of $5,069; that is to say, the

average donation of members to church comprises about one-third of one per cent. of the average income.

It may be suggested that this decided tendency is owing to the fact that to secure the figure used to represent average cash income, $500 was subtracted from the average farm income as derived by the Knauth method. The fact is, however, that even when the $500 is not deducted, the data show a decided downward tendency, the average contributions of the lowest farm income group of counties in that case representing 1 per cent. of the average farm income, and the highest group only one-third of 1 per cent.

These tendencies should not be taken too literally. It is not our purpose to prove that the members in the poorest counties give many times as much in proportion to their means as those in the richest. Nevertheless, our evidence clearly indicates that although there is a decided tendency for the average money contribution of individual members to become greater as the counties become more prosperous, these increases in per capita donations do not keep pace with increases in the wealth of the areas. When first considered, this tendency may seem quite incredible, since the smaller the means at a man's disposal the more in proportion must he spend on the mere necessities of life; and therefore we might suppose that church members in the poorest areas would give a decreased percentage to their churches. This does not prove to be true, however. The fact seems to be that because of its standardized program the church, at least in the open country areas, does not by any means receive the maximum financial support of rich counties. The rural church throughout America has developed a highly stereotyped program which in its financial aspects involves the upkeep of a church building, the salary of a minister, and the payment of denominational assessments. In a poor community it takes a relatively large proportion of the income of the members to put on even this narrow program, for a certain minimum is required to run a church in any community. In spite of the fact that church members may be very poor, these minimum requirements must be met or the members must abandon their

church enterprises entirely. Thus, in poverty-stricken localities, giving becomes a life and death matter to the church; and the members are therefore willing to make unusual sacrifices. As the county becomes more wealthy the members naturally have more money to contribute; but in these cases there is not a proportionately enlarged program properly to challenge the increased giving power. The richer the locality, therefore, the less immediate becomes the necessity of large financial sacrifices. Since a smaller percentage of the income of well-to-do members represents more actual cash than does a higher ratio in the case of poorer people, the need for the giving of a large proportion of their wealth steadily decreases with increasing prosperity because the church program remains fundamentally the same in both wealthy and impoverished communities.

Indeed when a congregation attains a certain average of wealth there is little incentive for the members to give more. Just because the church program is so standardized, it can be conducted in the traditionally approved manner in almost any rural county, for, say, twenty-five dollars a year a member. In a church of 100 people this means a yearly budget of $2,500; and for this amount they can secure the services of a resident minister, keep their church building in repair and pay all their denominational assessments. Having done all this, there is no real incentive for them to do more. Thus we find that the tendency for per capita money contributions to increase with increasing prosperity becomes less and less pronounced as the counties increase in wealth. For example, the two tables giving the relation of average contributions to average farm values and incomes show that the richest counties actually gave less money a member to church than the counties in the next-to-the-wealthiest groups. These differences are possibly accidental. In both instances the number of counties is too small to permit of the drawing of reliable conclusions; but at all events we are justified in stating that the tendency in our richest counties is for members to give, in proportion to their means, far less than the members in poorer counties.

Thus far the facts have shown:

1. That the average individual contributions of members of open country churches tend to increase with the increasing wealth of the areas in which the particular churches are located.
2. That the richer the county the less the members give in proportion to the means at their disposal.

Here, then, we have the keys to certain church puzzles. For one thing we begin to see a partial explanation of the differences in the average contributions of church members, not only between the major regions of the United States but within these regions.

EXPANDING RURAL CHURCH PROGRAMS

These facts also furnish an explanation of the present distribution of socio-religious agencies in rural areas. In poor counties the church is, except in a few instances, the only institution of its kind; while in rich areas we find, in addition to the churches, such socio-religious agencies as the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Community Service, Inc., Camp Fire Girls, etc., etc. In other words these agencies are concentrated in relatively wealthy localities. Indeed, the element of indigenous self-support is one of the determining factors in putting on these programs. A partial reason, therefore, for the present distribution of rural religious agencies of this type, becomes clear. Poor areas cannot support these social luxuries. It takes all of the available funds merely for the running of the churches. Rich regions, on the other hand, have need to spend only a relatively small proportion of their incomes to maintain their churches, so that comparatively large sums become available for other purposes.

In the light of these facts it seems pertinent to ask whether the denominations should not definitely plan to expand their rural programs in prosperous areas. Certainly, if our analysis is correct, the richer counties could well afford to support more elaborate church programs; while the development of socio-religious agencies in town and country areas

suggests that prosperous communities are not only able but willing to pay for them. To a large extent the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., and the like seem to have been developed to carry on where the church now stops. Some persons may hold, of course, that it is preferable to encourage the further development of socio-religious organizations rather than to have the church expand its functions for the reason that these non-sectarian agencies are more specialized than is the church. This very specialization is, however, a disadvantage as well as an advantage, because each organization deals only with certain particular problems. If, for example, a community wants a well-rounded program it should call in the Y.M.C.A., or the Boy Scouts, to handle the work with boys and young men, the Y.W.C.A., the Girl Scouts or the Camp Fire Girls to take care of the girl problem, the County Sunday School Association to deal with religious education. Even then it would not be sure that even its major social and religious problems were met.

Most communities, however, are not in position to support so large a number of these organizations. The churches, on the other hand, can fairly well adapt their programs to meet the needs of every age-group and sex-group, and can take over many of the functions of these other organizations. A study made by this Institute last year of the forty most successful town and country churches that could be found anywhere in America, well illustrates this point.[1] It showed that the church can successfully undertake many of the things upon which these socio-religious agencies are now engaged. It also indicated that church members in more prosperous counties are willing to pay for expanded services. The average contribution of members of these successful churches was 40 per cent. above the normal.

It is not our purpose in the present study to decide what should be the functions of the church as compared with those of the socio-religious agencies, especially as this Institute now has a study of this whole question under way. Our only point is that the denominations may well consider

[1] See *Churches of Distinction;* edited by Edmund deS. Brunner; George H. Doran Company, 1923.

whether they should not expand their range of service in prosperous rural areas.

EFFECT OF WEALTH UPON EXPENDITURES

Thus far our analysis has dealt only with the average *total contribution* of members. As yet, therefore, we do not know how economic conditions affect each of the major items that enter into the budget of a church. Of course, we can be virtually certain that in terms of dollars and cents all the major expenditures of a church increase as economic conditions improve; but does the rate of increase remain constant? For example, does the part of the budget devoted to missionary and benevolent enterprises increase in proportion as the county becomes more prosperous? *A priori* it seems reasonable to believe that this is so. In very poor localities the church's struggle for its own existence is so keen that it is but natural to assume that the churches located there would be able to devote only a relatively small proportion of their total budget to benevolent enterprises.

To determine these points concretely, however, let us further analyze the data for our ninety-six counties. We will again begin by classifying into farm-value groups the ninety-four of these counties that have open country churches. Then we may work out, for each group, the average individual contribution of members devoted (1) to the salary of the minister; (2) to the upkeep of the church plant; (3) to the general missionary and benevolent enterprise of the church. Results are shown in Table VIII.

This table makes it clear that on the average the members in prosperous counties give far more not only to the church budget as a whole but to each of the major items entering into it. Roughly speaking, the average contribution of members to salary, upkeep and benevolences, in the group of poorest counties, is about one-third as much as in the most prosperous areas. As this proportion holds for each of the items as well as for the total, it becomes evident that economic conditions do not appreciably affect the distribution

of a church's budget. But to make this point entirely clear, let us work out the proportion of the total contributed by the average member for these three major items in each of our farm-value groups. Chart III shows the result.

This chart makes it plain that in each group of counties the proportionate amounts spent for salaries, upkeep and benevolences are much the same. The amounts spent for ministers' salaries vary only between 45 and 53 per cent.; while "upkeep" fluctuates between 21½ and 26 per cent. This means that, roughly speaking, benevolences absorb between one-fourth and one-third of the total church budget.

TABLE VIII—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SALARY, UPKEEP AND BENEVOLENCES IN THE OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES OF THE 96 COUNTIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AVERAGE FARM VALUES

Farm-Value Groups	*No. of Counties*	*Farm Values*	*Average Expenditures of Members*				
			Running Expenses			*Benevolences*	*Total*
			Salary	*Upkeep*	*Total*		
Less than $10,000..	40	$ 5,532	$ 3.72	$1.51	$ 5.23	$1.77	$ 7.00
$10,000 to 20,000..	27	14,640	5.98	3.22	9.20	4.18	13.38
20,000 to 30,000..	13	25,228	10.16	5.21	15.37	4.75	20.12
30,000 to 40,000..	6	34,079	8.02	3.81	11.83	5.91	17.74
40,000 and over..	8	51,102	10.95	5.45	16.40	7.69	24.09

But there is little or no indication that these proportions vary with economic conditions. For example, the churches in rich counties do not give a larger proportion of their income to missionary and benevolent enterprises than churches in poor areas give. Indeed, the smallest proportion donated to benevolences was contributed, not in the group of poorest counties, but in the $20,000 to $30,000 farm-value group.

The lack of trend disclosed by this chart is of decided importance to church executives, because it means that the church members in wealthy areas are not contributing their *proportionate* shares to the benevolent enterprises of their denominations. True, our prosperously situated churches give about the same percentage of their total budget to

benevolences as do poor churches; but since it has already been shown that this total budget steadily declines in relative value as economic conditions improve, it follows that contributions to benevolences also show a downward tendency when considered in relation to the means at the disposal of the people. In other words, if we think of benevolences in terms of the financial sacrifices involved, rather than in terms of dollars and cents, poor counties make a far better showing than the more wealthy areas.

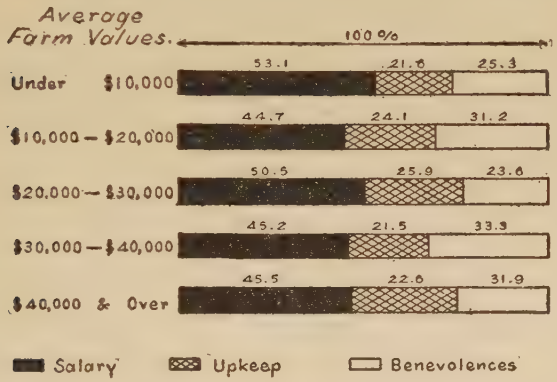

CHART III—PROPORTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SALARY, UPKEEP AND BENEVOLENCES IN THE OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES OF THE 96 COUNTIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AVERAGE FARM VALUES

SLIDING SCALE FOR APPORTIONMENTS

This tendency is especially important to church administrators because, although they have only indirect control over the running expenses of a church, they directly apportion monies for missionary and benevolent enterprises. If our analysis is correct, it raises the question whether the systems of apportioning funds for this purpose should not be changed so that the amounts of money asked may be more nearly proportional to the ability of the people to give. Doubtless an effort to induce wealthy church members to

give to missions and benevolences the same proportion of their incomes that members of poor churches give of theirs would be unavailing; but the differences can be equalized to a certain extent by the use of a sliding scale for apportioning church funds.

What the average individual contributions of rural church members should be, may reasonably be based upon the economic prosperity of the areas in which the churches are located. The question immediately arises: "What should be our index of economic conditions?" We have already seen that farm values and farm incomes are fairly reliable indices of the economic prosperity of open country areas. They, therefore, should furnish a basis for classifying *open country* churches according to the ability of the churches to contribute.

But most denominational executives in charge of rural churches are interested not only in open country churches but in village churches as well, and therefore need a basis for the classifying of both types of rural churches. Moreover, in actual practice it is not easy to discriminate between a village and an open country church. Even the Federal Census does not draw a precise line of demarcation between rural communities that have population centers of 250 or less, which is our definition of open country, and communities with population centers of between 251 and 2,500, which is our definition of a village. The Census does clearly discriminate, however, between population centers that are above or below 2,500. If, then, we can find a prosperity yardstick for village and open country areas combined, it will be far more useful for the purposes of church administration.

It has already been pointed out that the chief source of income in rural areas is agricultural, while manufacturing is largely limited to towns and cities. The question arises whether farm values or farm incomes would not be fairly accurate indices of the economic prosperity not only of open country areas but of villages as well. This would seem reasonable, because farm values and incomes would naturally be more or less affected by the prosperity of near-by

villages, while the economic status of the villages would in turn reflect the earning power of neighboring farms. If then our contention is true that average individual contributions of members vary with the economic prosperity of the areas in which the churches are located, the average donations in the village churches of a county will tend to vary as farm values vary.

Let us see whether this assumption is borne out by fact. The average farm value in each of our ninety-six counties has already been presented in Tables II and IV of the previous chapter, while Table IX presents the average contributions of the active members of village churches in these same counties.

We are now in a position to ascertain whether village members tend to give more money to their churches in the counties in which farm values are high. As before, we have thrown out every county that has less than five churches. On this basis, nineteen counties must be excluded. If now we correlate the remaining seventy-seven cases we find that the actual coefficient of correlation is $+.51 \pm .06$. This correlation is significantly lower than the degrees of relationship between farm values and the contributions to open country churches. This difference is probably traceable to the fact that agriculture is not as dominantly the source of income in villages as in more strictly rural communities; and it means that farm values are not as good an index of prosperity for villages as for open country areas. Nevertheless, our coefficient does indicate that there is a pronounced tendency for the members of village churches in rich agricultural regions to give more than members give in poor areas. The same general tendency can be seen if we use farm incomes in place of farm values. Here the correlation coefficient is $+.40 \pm .06$.

Thus we see that the average individual contribution of members varies with agricultural prosperity, not only in the open country churches of a county, but in village churches as well. This being the case, it seems reasonable to suppose that farm values and farm incomes would form a satisfactory basis for the classifying of village as well as

TABLE IX—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF (*a*) VILLAGE CHURCHES AND (*b*) VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES IN THE 96 COUNTIES

		(*a*) *Village Churches*		(*b*) *Village and Open Country Churches*	
State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*
Ala.	Colbert	3	$39.96	38	$12.47
Ark.	Montgomery	12	8.83	61	4.47
Cal.	Kern	7	43.45	14	42.48
	Orange	23	39.49	36	38.78
	Santa Clara	16	21.18	18	21.48
	Stanislaus	26	32.93	33	29.44
Colo.	Weld	28	15.72	54	19.00
Conn.	Middlesex	36	18.04	48	17.96
Fla.	Madison	10	12.50	41	7.73
	Osceola	0	....	3	14.53
	Pasco	17	15.11	30	13.52
Ga.	Bibb	7	18.84	18	11.33
	Clayton	11	8.00	22	6.89
	Columbia	2	10.84	19	6.94
	Dawson	0	....	15	1.88
	Echols	0	....	9	2.96
	Floyd	3	5.08	44	4.29
	Monroe	6	9.82	43	5.83
	Montgomery	9	10.73	27	6.30
	Paulding	9	4.22	42	2.82
	Telfair	7	8.79	33	5.54
	Webster	5	10.56	12	7.24
	White	4	2.60	29	2.17
Ida.	Gem	0	....	4	38.10
	Kootenai	10	16.52	22	14.55
	Twin Falls	6	21.36	12	22.98
	Washington	2	12.57	4	12.10
Ill.	Champaign	43	34.77	71	29.40
Ind.	Jennings	7	12.54	36	7.33
	Tippecanoe	16	16.70	41	15.25
Iowa	Clay	11	25.63	24	29.79
	Keokuk	31	17.18	57	16.39
Kans.	Sedgwick	24	23.27	53	24.70

TABLE IX—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF (*a*) VILLAGE CHURCHES AND (*b*) VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES IN THE 96 COUNTIES—*Continued*

		(*a*) *Village Churches*		(*b*) *Village and Open Country Churches*	
State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*
Md.	Harford	15	25.46	69	16.96
Mich.	Antrim	18	16.42	34	16.81
Miss.	Pearl River	6	31.06	31	5.75
Mo.	Atchison	12	20.20	31	22.10
	Wayne	16	17.12	62	11.78
Mont.	Beaverhead	2	50.17	3	31.60
	Chouteau	6	17.22	16	16.49
	Gallatin	8	26.47	13	23.26
N. J.	Mercer	15	12.73	23	12.22
	Salem	17	14.71	30	15.69
N. Mex.	Grant	2	37.25	3	33.77
	Torrance	4	14.05	11	10.67
	Union	5	38.29	28	18.11
N. Y.	Tompkins	22	20.36	57	19.50
N. C.	Durham	2	22.81	36	7.27
	Orange	20	14.52	53	8.72
N. Dak.	Nelson	12	31.79	23	24.47
Ohio	Coshocton	11	12.09	71	8.90
	Crawford	9	13.21	50	11.20
	Fayette	9	13.19	39	12.88
	Fulton	24	19.61	60	16.05
	Hardin	20	21.00	57	15.98
	Henry	23	11.58	60	13.91
	Holmes	20	11.23	49	11.21
	Miami	24	19.07	59	16.23
	Summit	23	20.32	52	18.38
	Wyandot	10	16.63	40	14.45
Okla.	Oklahoma	10	10.99	16	10.45
Ore.	Benton	3	11.77	19	11.51
	Crook	5	14.34	8	10.88
	Lane	26	17.85	51	14.63

TABLE IX—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF (*a*) VILLAGE CHURCHES AND (*b*) VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES IN THE 96 COUNTIES—*Continued*

		(*a*) *Village Churches*		(*b*) *Village and Open Country Churches*	
State	*County*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*	*No. of Churches*	*Average Contributions*
Pa.	Columbia	45	11.69	100	10.76
	Forest	13	18.18	30	14.59
	Northampton	38	9.88	93	9.21
S. D.	Hughes	5	29.85	9	33.08
	Jackson	1	26.75	5	33.36
	Kingsbury	11	28.81	18	27.51
Tenn.	Blount	6	7.53	79	10.38
	Dickson	9	3.44	33	3.07
	Johnson	6	8.92	49	5.87
Texas	Gonzales	5	9.83	25	8.24
	Hemphill	0	....	3	9.38
	La Salle	6	17.69	9	20.89
	Nueces	7	32.45	14	30.24
	Pecos	6	20.55	6	20.55
	Rockwall	9	15.73	23	18.36
	Sterling	5	19.43	5	19.43
	Zavalla	4	25.32	5	24.97
Vt.	Addison	13	17.03	40	17.45
	Franklin	26	18.33	41	17.27
	Lamoille	13	16.45	21	15.99
Wash.	Benton	17	21.59	24	22.09
	Chelan	13	27.30	28	28.92
	Pend Oreille	5	24.23	7	24.89
	Skagit	13	29.00	28	26.03
W. Va.	Raleigh	21	15.71	57	8.58
Wis.	Columbia	23	18.01	42	19.25
	Price	11	14.05	23	12.05
	Sheboygan	23	16.04	54	12.83
Wyo.	Big Horn	6	26.26	11	25.91
	Converse	2	33.95	6	21.26
	Platte	7	19.94	11	19.80
	Sheridan	2	1.84	8	14.36

of open country churches in accordance with their ability to contribute. Indeed, if we correlate average farm values with the average contributions of active members in both village and open country areas together, the coefficient of correlation is $+.66 \pm .04$. This is a high degree of relationship and shows that the average individual contributions of members of village and open country churches combined tend to vary decidedly from county to county as the

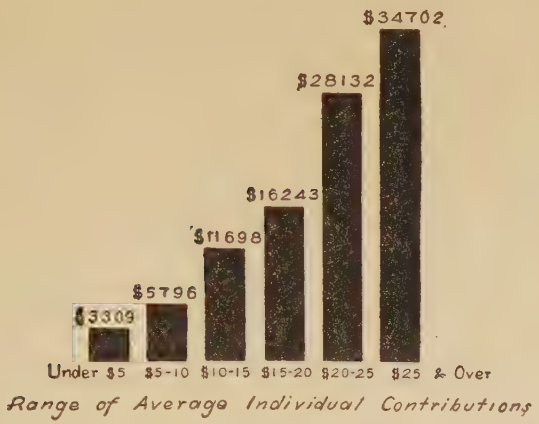

CHART IV—RELATION BETWEEN AVERAGE FARM VALUES AND AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY CHURCH MEMBERS IN 96 COUNTIES

average value of the farms vary. The tendency is shown graphically in Chart IV. If average cash incomes are used in place of average farm values, the coefficient for village and open country churches combined is $+.53 \pm .05$.

Our analysis leads therefore to the conclusion that farm values or farm incomes would be fairly reliable bases for the classifying of rural churches in accordance with the churches' ability to pay. Of the two, average farm value is probably the better because it is based upon the earning power of the farms over a period of years, while farm income, which is available for only the year of the Census, is

unduly affected by unusual conditions such as crop failure, bumper crops and the like. Farm values, therefore, should furnish a more reliable starting point than farm incomes for the classifying of rural churches in accordance with the churches' economic prosperity.

In actual practice certain exceptions necessarily would have to be made in applying this standard. In some counties farm values would not furnish a reliable criterion of economic conditions. For example, in counties where lumbering is the main source of income they might give an erroneous impression of the relative wealth of the people, although such a large proportion of the profits from this industry go to financial interests outside the local community that even in lumbering counties farm values would probably be a better index of the economic resources of the people than would an index based upon the assumption that these profits go to the local inhabitants. Another exception is to be found in the counties that are largely vacation resorts. Here the contributions of summer visitors would undoubtedly increase abnormally the average contributions from the churches.

Whatever the particular scheme developed to handle the problem, the main point is that wealthy areas are not at present contributing their full share to the support of the general missionary and benevolent enterprises of the denominations. A plan should therefore be worked out to insure that the amounts asked shall be more nearly in proportion to the ability of the people to give.

SUMMARY

Up to this point the facts have conclusively demonstrated that the actual cash that members contribute to their churches is not a reliable index of religious interest, because the amount of money that a member can give is conditioned very largely by his economic prosperity. If difference in wealth from county to county could be determined with a high degree of accuracy, it would, of course, be possible to find out what donations mean in relation to

the wealth at the disposal of the members. The proportion of a man's income that he contributes to religious enterprises is probably a good indication of his interest in religious institutions. When, however, one corrects for differences in wealth among counties, the figures presented in the last chapter show that the poor counties give far more to their churches in proportion to their wealth than the rich ones.

This might lead to the belief that impoverished communities take the greatest interest in their churches. But conclusions based upon these corrected figures are likely to be as misleading as are direct financial comparisons. Apparently denominations have not yet developed programs that challenge the full support of rich regions; therefore it is not surprising that the more prosperous areas do not make as large financial sacrifices for their churches as counties that are less well-to-do. Certainly it does not seem fair to criticize wealthy localities because they do not give more than is called for by their present church programs. Moreover, in very poor regions, as has already been pointed out, the church is usually the only religious institution, while the more prosperous rural communities have also various socio-religious agencies. For example, Orange County, California, which is a wealthy agricultural area, has in addition to its churches a Y.M.C.A. organization whose program costs more than $12,000, and a Boy Scout organization with an annual budget of more than $6,000, to mention only two of a number of similar agencies. In computing for this country the average individual contribution of members to religious enterprises, this fact should be taken into consideration. Yet this is impossible if one limits the comparison entirely to average donations to church. Theoretically, therefore, one ought to compare the contributions of members to all religious enterprises, not simply to churches. Yet in practice this also is out of the question, not only because of the difficulty in limiting the meaning of the term "religious enterprise," but also because it is impossible to find out how much the church members contribute to these other agencies.

Our data, therefore, show that money contributions should not be employed as a basis for comparing the religious interest of two churches, unless the churches have equally prosperous members. This means that financial comparisons of churches must be made with the greatest care. Indiscriminate comparisons are especially unfortunate because it so often happens that the contributions of churches in impoverished communities appear side by side with the contributions of churches of wealthy areas. Invidious comparisons of this sort are particularly disheartening to the ministers in poor localities who find it impossible to secure large donations.

Chapter IV

THE MEMBERSHIP MEASURE

Since financial contributions are of only limited value in the measuring of churches, let us turn to membership data, which constitute the other yardstick commonly employed. Membership figures are generally used in two ways. On the one hand the gain or loss in church membership of a given church or area is compared with that of another. An example of this method is seen in the special statements published annually by the Federal Council of Churches, showing the gains in Protestant church membership for the United States over the previous twelve months. The second method is to contrast, for given areas, the proportion of the population belonging to church in each area. A man will tell us that religious interest is high in a certain county and "prove" the statement by pointing to the fact that 50 or 60 per cent. of the people are church members; or that another locality has little religious interest because only 6 per cent. of the population is definitely affiliated with any church. This tendency was recently illustrated by Bishop Manning, of the Protestant Episcopal denomination, in a statement in which he tried to show that the interest of the American people in their churches is far higher now than it was a hundred years ago, because to-day the proportion of the inhabitants of the United States who are church members is much larger than it was a century ago.

EFFECT OF POPULATION TRENDS

Our purpose in this chapter is to ascertain more precisely than has been done heretofore, the significance of membership data as an index of religious interest. Let us begin by analyzing the figures showing gain or loss in church mem-

bership. What does it mean when one church has a net gain of twenty new members in a year while another church of similar size has none? Does this indicate that the members of the gaining church have a more vital type of Christianity than the members of the other church? Possibly so. From the way in which such figures are often applied, one would naturally come to this conclusion. But may not this difference in accessions result from the fact that the gaining church is in a community that is growing, while the stationary church is in an area of declining population? The Interchurch can help us answer this question, for it tried to secure the membership roll of every surveyed church, not only for 1920 but for 1910. This means that membership data for those years are available for a large number of churches in counties surveyed by the Interchurch. Fortunately, population figures for the town and country areas of these counties are also obtainable for the same years from the United States Census. It is possible, therefore, to see to what extent gain or loss in church membership followed changes in the population. As our basis of evidence, let us again turn to the ninety-six counties. Analysis shows that for sixty-seven of them, membership data at both periods are available for a majority of churches in each county. The actual figures are presented in Table X.

Here then is the sort of data needed to prove the effect of population trends upon church growth and decline. Has the growth in church membership over the last decade been high in counties that are rapidly growing and small in counties that are declining?

Before actually correlating, a word of warning is necessary regarding the figures themselves. The only membership figures available for this comparison were those showing the total roll of the church at the two periods. It is a notorious fact that the "dead-wood" in these rolls is weeded out only at irregular intervals. To a certain extent this is but natural. For instance, if Johnny leaves his home in the country to take a job in the city, the minister of the home church may be loath to erase his name from the church

TABLE X—WHITE RURAL POPULATION IN 1910 AND 1920 COMPARED WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP FIGURES IN 67 OF THE 96 COUNTIES

(Comparisons of Church Membership are Limited to Identical Churches for which Membership Data are Available at Both Periods)

State	County	Church Membership 1910	Church Membership 1920	White Rural Population—Federal Census 1910	White Rural Population—Federal Census 1920
Ala.	Colbert	3,447	3,796	12,253	16,081
Ark.	Montgomery	1,345	1,664	12,141	10,913
Cal.	Kern	190	409	24,123	35,498
	Orange	1,741	2,932	19,810	33,252
	Santa Clara	2,270	2,540	43,180	46,847
	Stanislaus	1,293	3,024	18,268	33,710
Conn.	Middlesex	4,102	4,109	33,483	33,643
Ga.	Bibb	1,175	1,263	6,650	8,377
	Clayton	1,991	2,730	5,821	6,153
	Columbia	1,552	1,741	3,124	3,467
	Dawson	1,216	1,106	4,534	4,204
	Echols	435	690	2,319	2,267
	Floyd	4,258	4,790	17,913	20,677
	Monroe	3,591	3,682	6,793	7,375
	Montgomery	1,027	1,484	12,328	4,819
	Paulding	3,950	4,056	12,536	12,418
	Telfair	2,621	3,246	8,527	10,284
	Webster	773	772	1,969	2,262
	White	1,484	1,562	4,713	5,709
Ida.	Washington	684	947	11,056	9,389
Ind.	Jennings	3,226	3,334	13,903	13,024
	Tippecanoe	3,345	3,187	19,933	20,306
Iowa	Clay	2,188	3,269	12,766	15,643
	Keokuk	4,240	5,608	21,143	20,964
Kans.	Sedgwick	3,982	4,727	20,437	19,935
Md.	Harford	4,672	5,459	22,849	24,687
Mich.	Antrim	966	933	15,561	11,391

TABLE X—WHITE RURAL POPULATION IN 1910 AND 1920 COMPARED WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP FIGURES IN 67 OF THE 96 COUNTIES—*Continued*

State	County	Church Membership 1910	Church Membership 1920	White Rural Population—Federal Census 1910	White Rural Population—Federal Census 1920
Miss.	Pearl River	3,055	2,915	8,170	11,220
Mo.	Atchison	2,872	3,686	13,590	13,004
Mont.	Beaverhead	444	535	6,350	7,296
	Gallatin	479	648	8,900	9,661
N. J.	Mercer	3,109	4,153	22,222	33,009
	Salem	3,793	4,089	16,084	20,720
N. Mex.	Union	312	565	11,360	16,654
N. Y.	Tompkins	4,209	4,448	18,782	18,237
N. C.	Durham	1,563	2,369	7,337	9,086
	Orange	3,867	4,625	10,138	12,258
Ohio	Coshocton	3,968	4,739	20,512	18,716
	Crawford	4,191	4,658	18,661	18,089
	Fulton	4,146	4,805	23,908	23,432
	Holmes	5,912	5,817	17,901	16,959
	Miami	6,222	7,922	25,308	25,956
	Summit	3,908	3,939	24,120	35,769
	Wyandot	4,376	5,691	20,736	19,466
Ore.	Benton	665	697	6,102	7,955
	Crook	441	486	8,849	3,421
	Lane	2,714	3,350	24,691	25,522
Pa.	Columbia	5,485	5,920	35,659	28,326
	Northampton	15,762	16,338	74,356	63,873
S. D.	Hughes	746	931	6,089	5,617
	Kingsbury	632	804	12,547	12,800
Tenn.	Blount	3,761	4,421	17,398	19,521
	Dickson	1,982	2,043	16,871	16,995
	Johnson	3,662	4,274	12,814	11,924

TABLE X—WHITE RURAL POPULATION IN 1910 AND 1920 COMPARED WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP FIGURES IN 67 OF THE 96 COUNTIES—*Continued*

State	County	Church Membership		White Rural Population—Federal Census	
		1910	1920	1910	1920
Texas	Gonzales	1,176	1,909	19,842	21,375
	Hemphill	385	775	3,170	4,278
	La Salle	230	214	4,654	4,799
	Pecos	123	560	2,068	3,850
	Rockwall	2,170	2,833	7,341	6,915
Vt.	Addison	3,168	3,359	19,962	18,628
	Franklin	2,277	2,608	23,466	22,429
	Lamoille	1,086	1,147	12,582	11,853
Wash.	Chelan	737	1,114	10,818	14,427
Wis.	Columbia	3,437	4,197	16,976	13,509
	Price	1,499	1,766	13,788	18,513
	Sheboygan	8,456	9,774	28,480	28,956
Wyo.	Sheridan	1,130	2,801	16,029	17,953

books because, as he reasons, the boy may soon return. Moreover, Johnny's parents are still active members of the church and are therefore anxious to keep his name on the official records. Possibly Johnny's family has a plot in the church cemetery and it is only reasonable to believe that he will be buried there. Thus Johnny's name may be kept indefinitely upon the books of the church, even though he may never return except for occasional visits. In this way, and in similar ways, many names are retained long after the members have established permanent homes elsewhere, or even after they have died. This would be true especially in communities that are declining in population. Therefore one would not expect membership figures over a ten-year period to keep pace with the population trends.

In the light of these facts, it is significant that the correlation between changes in the population and changes in membership gives as decisive a coefficient as $+.53 \pm .06$.

Even this degree of relationship would probably be considerably higher were it not for the fact that in certain counties the increase in population does not influence the membership of the Protestant churches located there because, for example, the newcomers may happen to be Catholics. But this possibility is not nearly so important a factor in town and country areas as it would be in cities where members of the non-Protestant faiths are proportionately more numerous.

The analysis brings us, therefore, to the conclusion that it is unfair to compare the growth or decline in membership of two churches, unless both are operating in communities in which the population trends are strictly comparable. If they are not, it is impossible to tell what proportion of the gains are due to effective evangelistic efforts and what part to the increase of population. The fact that membership figures follow very closely changes in the population will be given additional proof in Chapter X, where the variations in church membership over the past thirty years in Windsor County, Vermont, are contrasted with fluctuations in the population.

MEMBERSHIP RATIOS

Let us now turn to the second method of employing membership data as an index of religious interest; namely, through the membership ratio. What does it mean when 60 per cent. of the population in one county are church members, while only 6 per cent. are thus affiliated in another? Does this indicate that in these two counties there is a tenfold difference in the importance of the church in the life of the people? This is our present problem. The first step in solving it is to determine the membership ratios in each of the thirty-two counties used in Chapter II as our first sample when analyzing financial contributions. The reason for limiting ourselves to these counties instead of using the larger group of ninety-six is that more precise information is available for our smaller sample.

Since this is distinctively a comparative study of Protestant churches, it is not our aim to determine the ratio of church members to the total population in each of these counties, but rather to find the proportion of Protestants to the "Protestant population." By "Protestant population" is meant the Protestant church members plus all the inhabitants not affiliated with other religious bodies. A word of explanation will make the distinction clear.

If the Interchurch World Movement had surveyed all the rural churches of white membership in the thirty-two counties, it would not have been difficult to determine in each county the proportion of white members for each hundred inhabitants. It would have been necessary only to divide the church membership, as given by the survey, by the total white population as furnished by the Federal Census. But the Interchurch surveys not only excluded the non-white churches but the non-Protestant as well; so that before proceeding to work out the white Protestant membership ratios, it was necessary not only to eliminate Negroes and Orientals from the total population, but to make some allowance as well for the Jews, Catholics and other non-Protestants. This task of excluding the non-Protestants from the white population was not easy. Fortunately the Religious Census of 1916 gave the non-Protestant population for each county. Moreover, some information about these religious bodies was gathered by the Interchurch World Movement itself. Basing our estimates on the data from these two sources, the non-Protestants in the rural area of each county in 1920 were eliminated from the total white population ten years of age and over as secured from the 1920 Federal Census. The county's population ten years of age and over was employed rather than its total population, because Protestant church members, almost without exception, are persons over nine years of age.

It is not necessary to go into the intricacies of the computations involved in arriving at the Protestant population ten years of age and over. It is sufficient to say that the effort

was made to exclude all non-Protestant members of whom the largest number in rural areas are Roman Catholics. Now

TABLE XI—RATIO OF ACTIVE MEMBERS TO THE PROTESTANT POPULATION TEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY AREAS OF THE 32 TYPICAL COUNTIES

County	*State*	*Membership Ratios*
Monroe	Ga.	60.8%
Orange	N. C.	50.6
Sheboygan	Wis.	47.2
Rockwall	Texas	39.8
Columbia	Pa.	36.2
Miami	Ohio	35.1
Jennings	Ind.	34.2
Clay	Iowa	33.8
Sedgwick	Kans.	32.6
Hardin	Ohio	32.1
Durham	N. C.	31.8
Atchison	Mo.	31.6
Harford	Md.	27.6
Tompkins	N. Y.	25.4
Blount	Tenn.	24.0
Addison	Vt.	23.7
Salem	N. J.	22.9
Stanislaus	Cal.	21.4
Hughes	S. D.	21.0
Wayne	Mo.	19.4
Colbert	Ala.	18.8
Gem	Idaho	16.5
Sheridan	Wyo.	15.6
Weld	Colo.	13.8
Orange	Cal.	13.8
Raleigh	W. Va.	13.4
Price	Wis.	13.0
Benton	Ore.	11.6
Skagit	Wash.	10.8
Union	N. Mex.	9.2
Beaverhead	Mont.	6.7
Pend Oreille	Wash.	5.9

it is the practice of this denomination to include under the term "membership," persons whose relation to the church is more casual than is the case among most Protestant de-

nominations. In eliminating the non-Protestants, however, these persons have also been excluded because it was felt that if they were actually to become affiliated with any church it would undoubtedly be with the Roman Catholic. Protestant membership ratios, therefore, as worked out for thirty-two typical counties, are in each case the proportion of white Protestant church members to the total white population ten years of age and over from which have been subtracted the non-Protestant church members. In working out these ratios, *active membership* figures have again been used. An active member, it will be recalled, is one who attends church regularly or contributes to its support. On this basis the membership ratios are as shown in Table XI. These figures show tendencies very different from those shown by the average money contributions of members as presented in an earlier chapter. In fact, if the proportion of membership to population is correlated with the average contribution of active members in the town and country areas of these counties, the coefficient is $-.45 \pm .10$. This means that membership ratios not only indicate different trends but opposite trends. The counties with the lowest proportion of church members actually tend to give the largest average money contributions a member.

Instead of varying with economic conditions, as was the case with church finances, membership ratios seem to vary regionally. The ratios for the counties in the western half of the United States are far lower than for those in the eastern half. Not a single county west of the Mississippi Valley falls among our first seventeen counties with the highest membership ratios, while all except four of the last fifteen, which have the lowest ratios, lie in the far west or in the Range country. The four exceptions are Price County, in the heart of the cut-over lumber lands of northern Wisconsin; Raleigh County in the coal mining district of West Virginia; Colbert County, Alabama; and Wayne County, Missouri.

The differences among regions become even more obvious if we arrange our counties in five groups in accordance with the following regional classifications:

1. Northern Colonial[1]—Addison, Vt.; Tompkins, N. Y.; Columbia, Pa.; Salem, N. J.; Harford, Md.
2. Middle West—Hughes, S. D.; Sedgwick, Kans.; Clay, Iowa; Sheboygan, Wis.; Price, Wis.; Rockwall, Texas; Miami, Ohio; Hardin, Ohio; Jennings, Ind.; Atchison, Mo.
3. South—Orange, N. C.; Durham, N. C.; Monroe, Ga.; Blount, Tenn.; Wayne, Mo.; Raleigh, W. Va.; Colbert, Ala.
4. Range—Beaverhead, Mont.; Gem, Idaho; Pend Oreille, Wash.; Weld, Colo.; Union, N. Mex.; Sheridan, Wyo.
5. Pacific Coast—Orange, Cal.; Stanislaus, Cal.; Skagit, Wash.; Benton, Ore.

These groupings are based primarily upon the geographical location of the counties. The two or three doubtful cases, for example: Hughes, South Dakota, which falls between the Middle West and the Range country, and Harford, Maryland, which lies on the border line between the Northern Colonial and South, have been classified in accordance with the county's dominant type of agriculture. On this regional basis the ratios of white Protestant members to white Protestant inhabitants ten years of age and over in town and country areas are shown in Chart V.

If these membership ratios are really a direct index of the interest people take in their churches, it would seem that church interest was relatively high in the eastern counties, but low in the western groups. For instance, the conclusion would be justified that the rural church in the Pacific Coast counties was only half as well developed as in the Middle West. This comparison arouses skepticism concerning membership ratios as a direct index of the importance of the church in the life of the people. Observation does not bear out the conclusion that in the town and country areas east of the Mississippi valley there is twice the interest in the church that there is on the Pacific Coast. It is true that the proportion of church members to the population is smaller in the far west than in other parts of America; but is this not owing in large part to the fact that

[1] The term "Northern Colonial," as used throughout this book, applies to the region that includes not only the New England states but New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as certain parts of West Virginia and Maryland that are similar to adjacent areas in Pennsylvania.

the far west is a new country where social relationships are still in the making? In other words, the West has not yet developed its church traditions.

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF MEMBERS

In view of doubt as to whether these membership ratios are a *direct* index of the importance of the church in a given area, it was decided to check their significance by working out, for the thirty-two counties, the average amount of time

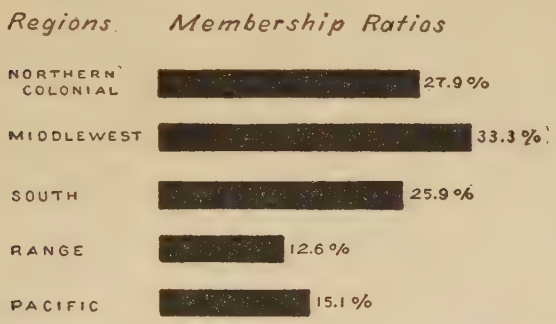

CHART V—ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP RATIOS OF THE 32 COUNTIES CLASSIFIED BY REGIONS

a month devoted by individual members to attendance at church services, or what may be termed the average individual "attendance interest" of members. The immediate aim was to ascertain whether the average attendance interest of members in the four Pacific Coast counties did not indicate greater interest in the church than might be assumed from the ratio of members to population.

At first sight it may seem quite arbitrary to estimate the attendance interest or the time devoted to the churches of a county, on the basis of the average attendance of members. In reality the use of this average is in no way different in principle from the use of average money contributions, which has become so customary in church statistics that it is entirely taken for granted, and which is extremely useful in

analyzing the financial tendencies of churches. The method of working out the average contribution, by members, of time devoted to church attendance is simple. The Introduction has already pointed out that the Interchurch secured not only the number of church services a month, but the average attendance at each. Therefore, it is possible to determine for each church the total number of services a month, or the monthly total attendance interest of the members.

In order to make the matter clear, let us take a concrete example under a hypothetical name. The Methodist Episcopal Church at Jones Crossing has a morning service each Sunday with an average attendance of thirty persons. Assume that on the average the church has four services a month. On this basis, four times thirty or 120 people, although not necessarily 120 different people, worship at the Sunday services of this church each month. In addition a mid-week devotional service is held once a month, usually attended by a dozen persons. Therefore the monthly attendance interest of this church devoted to worship is 120 plus twelve or 132. The Sunday school with an average attendance of forty-seven also meets every Sunday, so that the monthly attendance interest devoted to Sunday School is four times forty-seven, or 188. The only other activity of the church is a Young People's Society which meets once a month and has an average turn-out of fifteen. The monthly attendance interest commanded by this church can therefore be summed up as follows:

Type of Service	*Monthly Attendance Interest*
Worship	132
Sunday school	188
Socio-religious	15
Total	335

The total attendance interest of this church is 335. If then we divide this number by the total number of active members, which in this case happens to be forty-seven, the

result will show how the monthly attendance interest bulks in relation to the church membership. And if we regard

TABLE XII—AVERAGE MONTHLY TIME CONTRIBUTIONS, OR "ATTENDANCE INTEREST" OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO WORSHIP IN THE 32 COUNTIES

			Monthly Attendance Interest	
County	*State*	*Total Church Membership*	*Total for All Members*	*Average of Individual Members*
Stanislaus	Cal.	4,746	36,275	7.643
Union	N. Mex.	739	4,769	6.453
Benton	Ore.	688	4,365	6.344
Gem	Ida.	722	4,564	6.321
Orange	Cal.	3,205	19,180	5.984
Beaverhead	Mont.	345	2,041	5.916
Raleigh	W. Va.	3,177	17,635	5.551
Skagit	Wash.	2,162	11,898	5.503
Wayne	Mo.	1,789	9,807	5.482
Pend Oreille	Wash.	277	1,436	5.184
Hughes	S. D.	884	4,518	5.111
Blount	Tenn.	3,352	17,045	5.085
Sedgwick	Kans.	3,915	19,812	5.061
Weld	Colo.	4,004	20,225	5.051
Colbert	Ala.	2,145	10,389	4.843
Salem	N. J.	3,519	16,231	4.612
Sheridan	Wyo.	1,988	8,921	4.487
Addison	Vt.	2,777	12,450	4.483
Clay	Iowa	3,889	17,368	4.466
Harford	Md.	5,052	21,906	4.336
Monroe	Ga.	3,373	14,464	4,288
Tompkins	N. Y.	3,357	14,054	4.186
Atchison	Mo.	2,992	12,355	4.129
Orange	N. C.	4,565	17,663	3.869
Rockwall	Texas	2,026	7,769	3.835
Price	Wis.	1,426	5,467	3.834
Sheboygan	Wis.	9,579	36,660	3.827
Jennings	Ind.	2,702	10,212	3.779
Miami	Ohio	7,040	26,336	3.741
Hardin	Ohio	5,366	18,738	3.492
Columbia	Pa.	7,124	23,312	3.272
Durham	N. C.	2,321	4,640	1.999

each individual attendance as a unit of time devoted to church, then the ratio just obtained may be taken as repre-

senting the individual average time contribution of members to the church, just as the money ratio, derived by a similar calculation, is taken as representing the individual average money contribution of members.

But in this example we have used *total* attendance interest, including as it does the time devoted to Sunday school and to socio-religious activities as well as to worship, therefore the contributions of time to the church by persons who are not members are included, because the people who attend Sunday school and socio-religious meetings are to a large extent young folk rather than the church members. For this reason it was thought best to determine the average individual time contribution of members to *worship* only, rather than to the total activities of the church. By adding together the time contributions devoted to worship, for all the churches in a county, it is a simple matter of arithmetic to arrive at a county total. If then this figure is divided by the county's total active membership the result is the average monthly time contribution to worship or attendance interest of individual members. On this basis the thirty-two counties rank as is shown in Table XII.

These figures are most surprising because they indicate that as you go west from the Mississippi valley the average amount of time devoted to worship monthly by members decidedly increases. All but one of the seventeen counties with the lowest average individual attendance interest lie east of the Mississippi valley. This is just the reverse of the tendency we discovered when we were dealing with membership ratios.

We are now in a position to answer the specific question raised earlier in this chapter, whether the amount of time that the members devote to their churches in the four Pacific Coast counties does not indicate greater church interest than might be assumed from their membership ratios. Let us again combine the counties into regions on the same basis as before; but now we will include the time contributions of the members in addition to the membership ratios. Table XIII summarizes the results:

This table shows that for our counties located in the

Northern Colonial Area and in the Middle West, the attendance interest devoted to worship averages four services a month for each active member; in the South something less than four and one-half services; while in the Range the average is more than five services a member, and in the Pacific Coast group over six and one-half. In other words, attendance at church services in the last group of counties represents, for each active member, an average contribution of 65 per cent. more time a member than is contributed in the two northeastern areas.

Indeed, this table raises the question whether the average individual time contribution of members to worship does

TABLE XIII—AVERAGE MONTHLY TIME CONTRIBUTION OR ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO WORSHIP COMPARED WITH THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP RATIOS OF THE 32 COUNTIES CLASSIFIED BY REGIONS

Region	*Membership Ratios*	*Average Individual Attendance Interest of Members*
Northern Colonial	27.9%	4.0
Middle West	33.3	4.0
South	25.9	4.4
Range	12.6	5.2
Pacific Coast	15.1	6.6

not decrease as the membership ratio increases? To ascertain the fact, let us correlate the average time contribution to worship with the membership ratios in our thirty-two counties. The result is a coefficient of $-.59 \pm .08$, which indicates that the larger the membership ratio becomes the less becomes the average amount of time devoted monthly by individual members. In other words, the smaller the proportion of members to population, the larger the average amount of time the individual members contribute to the church's services of worship.

This conclusion may be objected to on the ground that membership ratios have been computed on the basis of the number of *active* members in each county. This type of

membership data, it may be urged, is both arbitrary and unusual. In order to answer this point it is necessary to enter into the mysteries of the three types of membership data collected by the Interchurch World Movement. The first of these was called the "present roll," and was simply the total number of members appearing upon the books of the churches. The inaccuracies in this sort of data have already been indicated in the previous chapter. The uncertainty in the total roll led to the securing of the second type of membership data, known as "resident membership." By this term was meant the total number of members living within attending-distance of a church. Generally speaking, any person whose home was outside the community in which the church was located was excluded from this classification unless he was a regular attendant. Finally, the number of "active members" was worked out. Any person on the roll who either attended services or contributed to the church's support was held to be an active member.

Throughout this part of the study we have used active membership figures as the basis for computing both membership ratios and average individual money contributions of members because it was felt that these figures furnished the most accurate index of the number of members in each county who contributed time and money to their churches. Resident membership figures were not used, because the number of inactive members varies somewhat from region to region. For example, an analysis of our ninety-six counties shows that in the southern counties less than 81 per cent. of the resident members are classified as active church members, while in the Range more than 89 per cent. are active members. A detailed comparison of the different membership figures for our thirty-two counties is presented in Table XIV.

An analysis of these figures indicates that, although there are certain significant differences, on the whole the relation between the different membership figures is quite constant, so that the tendencies discovered when using active memberships would not have been materially modified if either of the other two sets of membership figures had been employed.

TABLE XIV—COMPARISON OF THE TOTAL RESIDENT AND ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP FIGURES IN THE 32 COUNTIES

State	County	Membership		
		Total	*Resident*	*Active*
Ala.	Colbert	4,300	3,448	2,145
Cal.	Orange	3,991	3,525	3,205
	Stanislaus	5,451	4,941	4,746
Colo.	Weld	4,598	4,165	4,004
Ga.	Monroe	3,946	3,522	3,373
Idaho	Gem	905	781	722
Ind.	Jennings	3,722	2,904	2,702
Iowa	Clay	4,454	4,080	3,889
Kans.	Sedgwick	4,830	4,393	3,915
Md.	Harford	7,022	6,101	5,052
Mo.	Atchison	4,204	3,682	2,992
	Wayne	4,181	2,649	1,789
Mont.	Beaverhead	535	441	345
N. J.	Salem	4,909	4,204	3,519
N. Mex.	Union	1,089	936	739
N. Y.	Tompkins	4,677	3,841	3,357
N. C.	Durham	2,934	2,812	2,321
	Orange	6,279	5,640	4,565
Ohio	Hardin	6,356	5,749	5,366
	Miami	9,209	8,058	7,040
Ore.	Benton	923	754	688
Pa.	Columbia	8,769	7,801	7,124
S. D.	Hughes	1,066	958	884
Tenn.	Blount	6,145	4,409	3,352
Texas	Rockwall	3,124	2,679	2,026
Vt.	Addison	3,689	2,919	2,777
Wash.	Pend Oreille	341	278	277
	Skagit	3,114	2,688	2,162
W. Va.	Raleigh	4,325	3,806	3,177
Wis.	Price	1,827	1,669	1,426
	Sheboygan	10,184	10,010	9,579
Wyo.	Sheridan	3,130	2,634	1,988

For example, if the proportion of *resident* members to population is correlated with the attendance interest of *resident* members the coefficient is $-.55 \pm .09$, which is quite similar to the corresponding figure based upon active membership data. The conclusion is clear. The larger the per cent. of the population belonging to churches in town and country areas, the less is the average amount of time individual members devote to worship. At least this is true for our thirty-two counties.

LIMITATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP RATIOS

Unfortunately the necessary data are not available to check this tendency by another sample, as we were able to do with money contributions; but the difficulties in securing accurate attendance figures made it impossible to work out the "attendance interest" for a second group of counties. Nevertheless we feel that this tendency holds true for wide areas, not only because our thirty-two counties were selected as typical of the major rural areas in America, but also because the tendency is so entirely reasonable. It is but natural that in communities in which the proportion of members to the total population is small, the people should take more interest in the church than people in localities in which the membership ratios are high. In areas in which a small proportion of the inhabitants are church members, there are no social or economic advantages to be gained by joining a church; so that generally speaking only people vitally interested in it become members. Moreover, the very fact that the members are relatively few makes them feel keenly their individual church responsibilities. This is especially true in new communities. Here the members who first established churches often developed the crusader attitude with all the zeal that term implies.

In addition to the greater interest on the part of the members themselves, there is another factor of real importance. In areas where relatively few people are definitely affiliated with churches, a considerable number of persons who are not members attend services. This is true especially in recently

settled counties like those in the far west. To illustrate, the figures show that in Union County, New Mexico, each of the thirty-one churches, with only two exceptions, has an average attendance at its main Sunday service that is equal to or greater than its membership. The same tendency is not true of our eastern counties.

In places where membership ratios are high, the situation is in many respects entirely different. In these cases, joining church becomes the traditional thing to do. People become church members not only from religious motives, but from social and economic considerations as well. Thus the religiously lukewarm join church. All the best people in town belong, and the man who does not affiliate himself with any church is looked upon with raised eyebrows. Just as it takes moral courage to be a church member in communities where few belong, so in the localities where it is traditional to join, it takes either moral courage or a stony indifference to public opinion to stay out.

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Again, in counties where the great majority of people are already church members, there are fewer "outsiders" to swell the ranks of the members who attend. For example, in Pend Oreille County, Washington, 94 per cent. of the Protestant population ten years of age and over are unattached to any church, while in Monroe County, Georgia, less than 40 per cent. are unaffiliated. In the former, therefore, the per cent. of non-church members is nearly two and one-half times as large as in the latter. Assuming that the same proportion of unaffiliated persons in both counties occasionally attended church, the proportion of such persons would be appreciably greater in the far western county.

Our material, therefore, leads to the conclusion that membership ratios are not a *direct* index of the place of the church in the life of the people. Certainly the time that the members devote to their churches does not follow in direct proportion to membership ratios. To be specific, we would not expect the individual members in a county in which 60 per cent. of the inhabitants were church members to devote tenfold the average amount of time to services of worship that would be contributed in a county in which only 6 per

cent. of the population were definitely affiliated with the church, and certainly we should not expect this if the county with the low membership ratio were situated in a recently settled region, like many in the far west where the traditions of church membership have not yet been developed. This fact is of importance to church executives because it indicates the danger of overestimating the religious interest of communities in which membership ratios are high. Just because the majority of people in a given region are church members, is no reason for denominational self-complacency, for in these counties the interest of the average member as judged by his participation in the church's services tends to be at low ebb. Membership ratios are, therefore, an index of the traditional place of the church in the life of the community, rather than a direct measure of the interest of the people in the church.

Chapter V

THE TEST OF ATTENDANCE

Thus far the analysis has led us to the conclusion that the average contribution of money that individual members give to their church is decidedly influenced by their economic prosperity; and, secondly, that the growth or decline in a church's membership tends to reflect the population trends of the area in which the church is located. These two standards of comparison, therefore, should be used with great caution when one is contrasting one church with another. In every case, the churches measured should be limited to those operating in comparable communities in which economic conditions and population trends are similar; otherwise it is impossible to tell what part of the differences between them are due to environmental factors and what part to conditions *within* the churches themselves. Unfortunately distinctions of this sort are seldom observed in church statistics.

Regarding membership ratios, the facts have shown that this index is decisively influenced by what we have called traditional elements. Certainly this analysis has brought out the fact that the larger the proportion of the population that belongs to church, the less the time that each member contributes to its services. Therefore, membership ratios should not be used as a *direct* index of the importance of the church in the life of an area. In a community in which it is highly customary to belong to church, many people, so we believe, are church members who seldom attend and who, if they were to move to the far west where the tradition of joining church is less firmly established, would probably not become members at all. In other words, there is a sort of religious law of diminishing returns. The higher the membership ratio the larger the proportion of religiously

"lukewarm" members who are influenced to join church by social or economic considerations. This means that when one compares the proportion of members to population in a county where the ratio is high, with the proportion in a county in which it is low, one is likely to overestimate the real importance of the church in the former county; or, in other words, to underestimate its importance in counties in which the ratio is small. This is true particularly when contrasting the membership ratios in old and new communities.

In the light of these facts, this chapter will attempt to develop another unit for measuring the place of the churches in the life of an area. This new yardstick is *the average amount of time contributed monthly to the services of the churches by the inhabitants, or, in other words, the monthly attendance interest of inhabitants devoted to the services of the churches.*

THE GILL AND PINCHOT STUDY

The belief that the time people contribute to their churches furnishes an excellent index of their interest in them, is not an original idea with this Institute. As early as 1913, Messrs. Gill and Pinchot wrote: "It is neither membership not expenditures but attendance which furnishes the best measure of the hold of the church upon its people."[1] In their study of Windsor County, Vermont, and Tompkins County, New York, published in *The Country Church,* Messrs. Gill and Pinchot classified the inhabitants of the counties in four groups. In the first they put those who attended church more than two-thirds of the Sundays in the year; in the second, those attending one-third to two-thirds; in the third class, those going less than one-third of the Sundays in the year; and in the fourth, non-church goers. By adding together the totals of the first two groups, they secured "the number of persons who attended a church service, or services, at least one-third of the Sundays in the year." In other words, these investigators were trying to

[1] *The Country Church,* Macmillan, p. 15.

measure the proportion of the population interested enough in the churches to attend services at least every third Sunday.

From the standpoint of our studies, the Gill and Pinchot method has two weaknesses. In the first place, there is no precise or objective way of telling whether or not a man attends church one-third of the Sundays in the year, because it is virtually impossible to get correct data on this point. In the second place, their method tacitly assumes that there are churches to attend every Sunday. As to the two regions studied by them this assumption is essentially correct, for both Windsor County and Tompkins County have a large number of easily accessible churches with one or more services each Sunday. There are, however, many places in the United States where the average church service is less frequent than once a week. In this case, the fact that men and women feel it their duty to go, and the fact that they wish to go to church, which were the two motives stressed by Gill and Pinchot, are not the only limiting factors. The opportunities for worship that the church itself affords are equally important. Attending church every Sunday is one thing in a community in which church services are held every Sunday, but quite another thing where services are conducted only once or twice a month. In a nation-wide survey this factor must be taken into consideration.

To avoid the difficulties of the Gill and Pinchot method, the index of attendance used in this study is the average monthly contribution of time to church *by the Protestant inhabitants,* or the individual monthly attendance interest *of Protestant inhabitants.* This is the same sort of an index as is the average individual time contribution *of members* to worship, which was developed in the last chapter, except that in this case the effort has been to find how monthly attendance at church bulks, not in relation to the number of church members, but in proportion to the total Protestant population. In working out this ratio we have not limited ourselves to the monthly attendance interest devoted to worship only, but have used instead the total monthly at-

tendance interest in all activities, which includes contributions of time to Sunday school and socio-religious activities as well as to worship. This change was made because we are now dealing with total Protestant population, which includes the young people who attend Sunday school and socio-religious activities.

The individual monthly attendance interest of inhabitants has been used rather than of members; because, as the last chapter indicated, the meaning of the term "church members" varies from one region to another. For example, in a county in which it is highly traditional to be a member, many people will be classified as members who take no more interest in the church than do certain groups of non-members in counties in which church membership is less traditional. If our attendance index, therefore, were based upon the average individual contribution of members, it would follow that each member in the counties where a relatively small proportion of the inhabitants belong to church, would be given credit for attendance at services that in reality should be credited to persons not members. Moreover this would be true in these counties to a much larger extent than in counties where membership ratios are high. By the use of individual attendance interest *of Protestant inhabitants,* this difficulty is almost entirely avoided, for in this case the only assumption is that the Protestant inhabitants of a county are the people who attend its churches, while in the other cases the assumption has to be that the *church members* in a county are the only ones who attend church.

ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS

Our index of attendance has been computed, therefore, by dividing the total attendance interest of a county's Protestant churches by its total Protestant population. A concrete illustration will make the method clear. Take for example, Addison County, Vermont. The Interchurch questionnaires gave the average attendance and number of meetings a month for the various services of each church in

the county, so that it is possible to work out for every church the total monthly attendance interest devoted to worship, to Sunday school and to socio-religious activities. By adding together these totals for the county's forty churches, we find that the aggregate attendance at church services each month average 19,544. The entire population in the town and country area is given by the Federal Census of 1920 as 18,666; but according to our best estimates, 22.1 per cent. of the population ten years of age and over are members or adherents of non-Protestant churches. Assuming that this same proportion holds for the children under ten years, the white Protestant population is really 14,511. Since these people attend 19,544 church services a month, the average monthly attendance of the individual ininhabitants is about one and one-third services. In like manner this same index of attendance has been worked out for each of our thirty-two counties. For purposes of convenience, this ratio between the total monthly attendance interest of all the Protestant churches in a county and the Protestant population in the same area will be referred to as "the attendance interest ratio." This ratio is quite comparable with a county's membership ratio, except that in this case the aim has been to see how monthly attendance interest, rather than membership, bulks in proportion to the population. The attendance interest ratios for our thirty-two counties are given in Table XV.

Here then we have the attendance interest ratios or the average amount of time that individual Protestant inhabitants devote to church services monthly in each of our thirty-two counties. Its exact meaning can be made clear from the table. The first county in the list is Monroe, Georgia, with an attendance interest ratio for the Protestant population of 2.659.[2] This simply means that the total number of Protestant church services attended each month in that county represents nearly two and two-thirds services for each Protestant inhabitant. Orange County, North Carolina, comes next with 2.489, which means that in this county

[2] Our index of attendance has been carried to three decimal places in order that the counties may be more easily ranked.

TABLE XV—MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY AREAS OF THE 32 COUNTIES

County	State	White Population 1920 Federal Census	Estimated Per Cent. of Non-Protestants	Estimated Protestant Population	Total Attendance Interest	Attendance Interest Ratios
Monroe	Ga.	7,375	...	7,375	19,608	2.659
Orange	N. C.	12,258	0.8	12,160	30,269	2.489
Sedgwick	Kans.	19,935	21.1	15,729	35,102	2.232
Sheboygan	Wis.	28,956	12.4	23,813	50,874	2.136
Stanislaus	Cal.	33,710	17.0	27,979	59,025	2.110
Clay	Iowa	15,643	5.9	14,720	28,835	1.959
Rockwall	Texas	6,915	0.4	6,887	13,327	1.935
Miami	Ohio	25,956	2.2	25,385	48,355	1.905
Atchison	Mo.	13,004	6.2	12,198	22,956	1.882
Blount	Tenn.	19,521 *	2.4	19,052	35,627	1.870
Columbia	Pa.	28,326	10.0	25,493	47,334	1.857
Harford	Md.	24,687	8.7	22,539	39,957	1.773
Hardin	Ohio	21,270	1.0	21,057	35,935	1.707
Hughes	S. D.	5,617	5.4	5,314	8,990	1.692
Jennings	Ind.	13,024	11.0	11,591	19,102	1.648
Tompkins	N. Y.	18,237	12.0	16,049	26,126	1.628
Salem	N. J.	20,720	6.0	19,447	27,064	1.390
Wayne	Mo.	13,003	1.7	12,772	17,469	1.368
Addison	Vt.	18,628	22.1	14,511	19,544	1.347
Gem	Ida.	6,405	9.8	5,777	7,393	1.280
Orange	Cal.	33,252 †	11.7	29,362	36,130	1.231
Colbert	Ala.	16,081	1.0	15,920	19,114	1.201
Durham	N. C.	9,786 ‡	3.4	9,453	11,051	1.169
Union	N. Mex.	16,654	33.5	11,075	11,606	1.048
Sheridan	Wyo.	17,953 §	9.5	16,247	16,657	1.025
Benton	Ore.	7,955	4.8	7,573	7,498	0.990
Skagit	Wash.	27,409	7.5	25,353	23,623	0.932
Raleigh	W. Va.	36,089	4.7	34,393	31,713	0.922
Weld	Colo.	42,152	5.4	39,876	34,402	0.863
Price	Wis.	18,513	19.9	14,829	11,970	0.807
Beaverhead	Mont.	7,296	12.3	6,399	4,157	0.650
Pend Oreille	Wash.	6,240	6.1	5,859	3,560	0.608

In deriving town and country population,

* Alcoa and Maryville considered as one urban territory with an estimated population of 9,000.

† Orange City (population 4,884) excluded because of its urban character.

‡ East and West Durham with an estimated population of 8,000 excluded together with Durham City.

§ Sheridan City (population 9,175) included in town and country population because this city is the trading center for the rural population.

the time devoted to churches represents slightly less than two and one-half services for each Protestant inhabitant; and so on down the list until we come to low counties like Benton, Oregon; Skagit, Washington; Raleigh, West Virginia; Weld, Colorado; Price, Wisconsin; Beaverhead, Montana; and Pend Oreille, Washington, where monthly attendance at church services represents less than one service for each Protestant inhabitant. Since differences in the population of the various counties have been taken into consideration, it is justifiable to compare the index for one county with that for another. For example, it follows from our figures, that the people in Monroe County, Georgia, attend church on the average about four times as much as the people in Beaverhead, Montana; for, as our table shows, in the former county the attendance interest ratio is 2.659, while in the latter it is only one-fourth as great, being 0.650.

Having determined the precise meaning of our attendance interest ratio,[3] we are now in a position to use it to settle the disagreement between the two church indices generally employed—money and membership ratios.

Does the amount of time each inhabitant devotes to church services in our thirty-two counties vary as the individual money contributions of active members, or is it more likely to fluctuate as do membership ratios? To answer the first of these questions let us correlate the attendance index just developed, with average individual donations as presented in Table I of Chapter II. The actual coefficient is $-.21 \pm .11$, which indicates that if there is any tendency at all it is negative rather than positive; that is, in counties in which the average money contributions of members are large, the average time devoted to church by each inhabitant is more likely to be low than high. Thus it becomes doubly evident that just as the money index and membership ratios showed con-

[3] It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this attendance interest ratio should not be confused with the average individual time contribution of members to worship, which was developed in the preceding chapter. The attendance interest ratio shows how the total monthly attendance of a county's churches bulks in relation to the total *Protestant population;* while the average individual time contribution of members to worship shows how the total monthly attendance at services of worship bulks in relation to the *church membership.*

flicting trends, so this money index and our attendance interest ratios present entirely different pictures.

If, however, we correlate attendance interest ratios with membership ratios as presented in Table XI of Chapter IV, the correlation is $+.91 \pm .02$. This is an unusually high coefficient and indicates that the degree of relationship between these two sets of data is extremely close. In other words, if the membership ratio increases, the average amount of time that individual inhabitants devote to church will also tend to increase. The conclusion is unavoidable; membership ratios are a better index of the importance of the church in the life of a county than average money contributions.

MEMBERSHIP VS. ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIO

Nevertheless, we believe that in certain important respects the attendance interest ratio is a far better standard for judging the church than are membership ratios. It is true that the two sets of data are very closely correlated, or in other words, that changes in one are accompanied to a remarkable degree by changes in the other. Thus in a county in which the membership ratio is low, we would expect, with a very high degree of probability, to find the attendance interest ratio low, and vice versa. The significant fact is that time contributions do not show the same amplitude of variation as do membership ratios. Thus, if one uses membership ratios as a direct index of religious interest, one is almost sure to overestimate the time contributions to church in counties in which the ratio is high, and to underestimate them in counties in which it is low. This is clearly shown in Table XVI.

The first column of figures in this table gives the membership ratios of our thirty-two counties arranged in a descending sequence, while the second column shows the corresponding attendance interest ratio for each of the same counties. Now the immediate purpose is to find out whether our attendance data fluctuates from county to county more or less than the membership ratios. To present this point,

TABLE XVI—FLUCTUATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP RATIOS IN THE 32 COUNTIES COMPARED WITH FLUCTUATIONS OF ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS

		Actual Numbers		*Index Numbers**	
County	*State*	*Membership Ratios*	*Attendance Interest Ratios*	*Membership Ratios*	*Attendance Interest Ratios*
Monroe	Ga.	60.8	2.659	265.5	191.3
Orange	N. C.	50.6	2.489	221.0	179.1
Sheboygan	Wis.	47.2	2.136	206.1	153.7
Rockwall	Texas	39.8	1.935	173.8	139.2
Columbia	Pa.	36.2	1.857	158.1	133.6
Miami	Ohio	35.1	1.905	153.3	137.1
Jennings	Ind.	34.2	1.648	149.3	118.6
Clay	Iowa	33.8	1.959	147.6	140.9
Sedgwick	Kans.	32.6	2.232	142.4	160.6
Hardin	Ohio	32.1	1.707	140.2	122.8
Durham	N. C.	31.8	1.169	138.9	84.1
Atchison	Mo.	31.6	1.882	138.0	135.4
Harford	Md.	27.6	1.773	120.5	127.6
Tompkins	N. Y.	25.4	1.628	110.9	117.1
Blount	Tenn.	24.0	1.870	104.8	134.5
Addison	Vt.	23.7	1.347	103.5	96.9
Salem	N. J.	22.9	1.390	100.0	100.0
Stanislaus	Cal.	21.4	2.110	93.4	151.8
Hughes	S. D.	21.0	1.692	91.7	121.7
Wayne	Mo.	19.4	1.368	84.7	98.4
Colbert	Ala.	18.8	1.201	82.1	86.4
Gem	Idaho	16.5	1.280	72.1	92.1
Sheridan	Wyo.	15.6	1.025	68.1	73.7
Weld	Colo.	13.8	.863	60.3	62.1
Orange	Cal.	13.8	1.231	60.3	88.6
Raleigh	W. Va.	13.4	.922	58.5	66.3
Price	Wis.	13.0	.807	56.8	58.1
Benton	Ore.	11.6	.990	50.7	71.2
Skagit	Wash.	10.8	.932	47.2	67.1
Union	N. Mex.	9.2	1.048	40.2	75.4
Beaverhead	Mont.	6.7	.650	29.3	46.8
Pend Oreille	Wash.	5.9	.608	25.8	43.7

* Salem, the sixteenth county in both series = 100.

so that it will be clear to the eye, it will be necessary to convert both sets of figures to a comparable basis. Probably the first method that would occur to most people would be to see how widely the two sets of data fluctuate from their average. Unfortunately, our membership ratio is made up of a series of percentages and in this particular case it would be incorrect to average this column of percentages. Since it is not possible to use the ordinary arithmetic average as our base, let us turn to another type of average—the median, which is simply the value of the middle case in any series of numbers. Here again we strike a snag, since our sample includes thirty-two cases and therefore no county falls exactly at the middle point of either series. It so happens, however, that Salem County, with a membership ratio of 22.9 per cent. and an attendance interest ratio of 1.390, ranks sixteenth in both groups. Since this is practically the middle case in both sets of data, let us use this typical county as our base.

Having settled upon Salem County as the base in both cases, we are now in a position to determine the percentage variation of both series from this mid-county value. In order that the two series may be upon strictly comparable bases, let the membership ratio and our attendance interest ratio in Salem County each equal one hundred. Then work out the per cent. of variation of every other county from this base. In this way the two series can be translated into strictly comparable terms. Such figures, which are known in statistics as "index numbers," are shown in columns three and four of the table. The former column presents variations in membership ratios and shows that if Salem's membership ratio of 22.9 per cent. is considered as 100, then Addison County, with a membership ratio of 23.7 per cent., or in other words, with a ratio 3.5 per cent. higher than in Salem County, has an index number of 103.5; and so on throughout the entire list of counties. In like manner, column four presents similar index numbers for our attendance interest ratios.

Having converted the membership ratios and the attendance interest ratios into comparable index numbers, we

are now in a position to find out to what extent they show the same amplitude of variation. If they both fluctuated to exactly the same extent, there would be a one to one correspondence between our two series of index numbers. For example, we should find that in Sheboygan County,

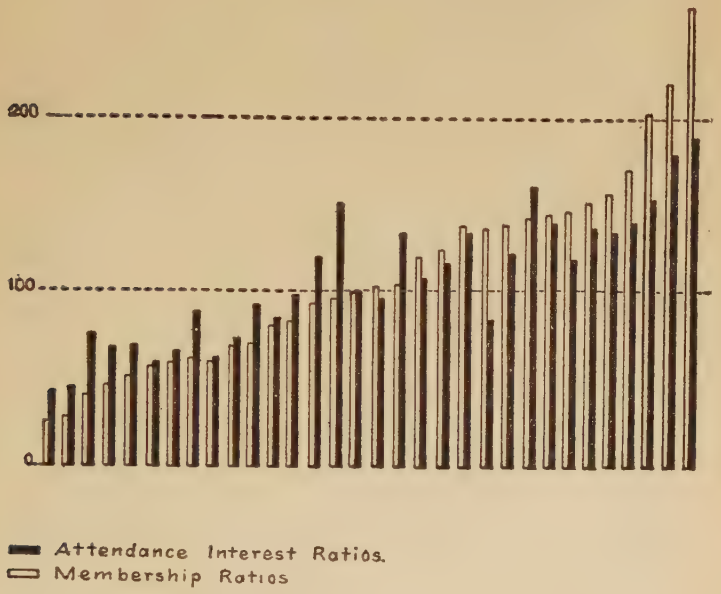


CHART VI—VARIATIONS IN ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS COMPARED WITH COMPARABLE VARIATIONS IN MEMBERSHIP RATIOS IN THE 32 COUNTIES

where the membership ratio is roughly twice as high as in Salem, the attendance interest ratio would also be doubled; and that in Benton, Oregon, where the membership ratio is only half as high as in Salem, attendance would also be halved. This, however, is not the case as is clearly seen in Chart VI, which plots the two series of index numbers side by side. This graph shows that on the whole each of the counties having the highest membership ratios has appreciably lower attendance interest ratios, while every one of

the counties with comparatively low membership ratios devotes a considerably larger amount of time to church for each inhabitant.[4]

Thus the facts force us to the opinion that the amount of time that people devote to their churches does not vary from county to county to the same extent as do membership ratios. Between the highest and the lowest county there is less than a four-and-one-half-fold difference in attendance interest, while membership ratios show more than a tenfold variation. The conclusion is unavoidable. The interest of Protestant population in their churches, if measured by monthly attendance, is much more uniform than membership figures would lead us to believe. From a sociological standpoint this is a significant fact, because it shows that the hold of the church upon the people is more constant throughout the rural areas of America than has generally been believed. In other words, people in rural areas attend church with greater uniformity than they join it. For this reason, we feel that the attendance interest ratio is a better index of the place of the church in the life of an area than are membership ratios. In addition, it has another decisive advantage. This attendance index can be applied to individual churches, while membership ratios cannot. In most cases it is entirely impossible to find the proportion of members to inhabitants for any given church, because the population area for which the church is responsible cannot be accurately defined. Parish lines hopelessly overlap. Our attendance index, on the other hand, can be used to test an individual church, for it can be employed to see how the church's aggregate monthly attendance interest bulks in relation to its membership. In this way our attendance data furnish a new unit for measuring the individual church. This new yardstick will be actually applied in Chapter VIII.

[4] The fact that attendance ratios do not fluctuate so widely as the membership ratios in our thirty-two counties can be still more precisely demonstrated by working out the coefficient of variability for the two sets of data, using the standard formula $V = \frac{S.D.}{M} \times 100$. In this case the coefficient for our attendance index is 34.2 compared with 52.0 for our membership figures.

FACTORS AFFECTING ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS

Thus far we have tested the two customary methods of comparing churches and have found them wanting in certain respects. We have therefore developed a new standard for measuring the church based upon the aggregate monthly attendance at church. This attendance index when worked out for the thirty-two typical counties has shown that religious interest as indicated by attendance at church does not vary from county to county to nearly the same extent as membership ratios might lead one to believe. But they do show variations which, at a maximum, reach four-and-one-half-fold. The rest of this chapter, therefore, will be devoted to an effort to determine some of the influences that bring about these differences. For one thing, density is a factor. It is far easier for a man to attend church when the building is just around the corner than when it is so far away that it takes half a day to go and return. Now, by and large, our counties with the smallest densities are the ones in which the Protestant populations tend to go to church least. This tendency becomes clear if we correlate our attendance index with the *total density* of the white population in the town and country areas of our thirty-two counties. In this case, the coefficient is $+.37 \pm .10$. Total density figures, however, are decidedly influenced by the number of towns included within the area. The open country areas of a county may be very sparsely settled, but if there are one or two towns located within its borders the average density may be quite high. In reality, however, distance is a factor that in the main influences the attendance of only those people who live in the open country. We could hardly expect one townsman to attend church far more regularly than another simply because he lived a block or two nearer the church. In other words, the effect of density is limited very largely to open country inhabitants.

One may therefore assume that the best way to determine the influence of density upon attendance is to correlate the attendance interest ratio of a county's open country churches

TABLE XVII—MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS COMPARED WITH DENSITY OF THE WHITE POPULATION IN THE VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY AREAS OF THE 32 COUNTIES

County	*State*	*Area in Square Miles*	*White Population*	*Density per Square Mile*	*Estimated Protestant Population*	*Total Attendance Interest*	*Attendance Interest Ratios*
Beaverhead	Mont.	3,524 *	4,636	1.3	4,340	878	0.202
Union	N. Mex.	5,370	14,501	2.7	9,643	7,630	0.791
Hughes	S. D.	759	2,438	3.2	2,235	3,094	1.384
Sheridan	Wyo.	1,975 *	8,937	4.5	8,088	2,956	0.365
Gem	Ida.	567	4,216	7.4	4,113	1,156	0.281
Pend Oreille	Wash.	791 *	6,240	7.9	5,859	3,560	0.608
Weld	Colo.	4,022	42,152	10.5	39,876	34,402	0.863
Monroe	Ga.	584	6,184	10.6	6,184	11,690	1.890
Price	Wis.	1,279	13,865	10.8	12,944	6,139	0.474
Benton	Ore.	688	7,955	11.6	7,573	7,498	0.990
Skagit	Wash.	1,774	20,708	11.7	19,155	12,232	0.639
Wayne	Mo.	775	13,003	16.8	12,772	17,469	1.368
Clay	Iowa	563	11,055	19.6	7,940	14,974	1.886
Sedgwick	Kans.	994	19,935	20.1	15,729	35,102	2.232
Stanislaus	Cal.	1,450	30,328	20.9	25,172	32,221	1.280
Atchison	Mo.	528	11,134	21.1	10,444	14,106	1.351
Colbert	Ala.	618	13,507	21.9	13,372	11,346	0.848
Addison	Vt.	756	18,628	24.6	14,511	19,544	1.347
Jennings	Ind.	383	10,088	26.3	9,286	12,225	1.316
Durham	N. C.	312	9,786	31.4	9,453	11,051	1.169
Orange	N. C.	390	12,258	31.4	12,160	30,269	2.489
Blount	Tenn.	571	19,521	34.2	19,052	35,627	1.870
Orange	Cal.	795	28,870	36.3	25,492	29,281	1.149
Tompkins	N. Y.	476	18,237	38.3	16,049	26,126	1.628
Hardin	Ohio	473	18,949	40.0	18,760	23,595	1.257
Rockwall	Texas	149	6,915	46.4	6,887	13,327	1.935
Harford	Md.	442	21,116	47.8	19,279	33,235	1.724
Sheboygan	Wis.	521	25,541	49.0	21,272	45,511	2.139
Raleigh	W. Va.	597	32,640	54.7	31,106	23,654	0.760
Columbia	Pa.	479	28,326	59.1	25,493	47,334	1.857
Salem	N. J.	343	20,720	60.4	19,477	27,064	1.390
Miami	Ohio	408	25,956	63.6	25,385	48,355	1.905

* Excluding Forest Reserve territory.

with the density of population in the same area. But, because so many open country members attend village churches, it is probably better to include in such a correlation both village and open country areas. In our thirty-two counties, let us therefore compare attendance with density in the areas having population centers of 2,500 or less. The grouping of the counties on this basis is shown in Table XVII.

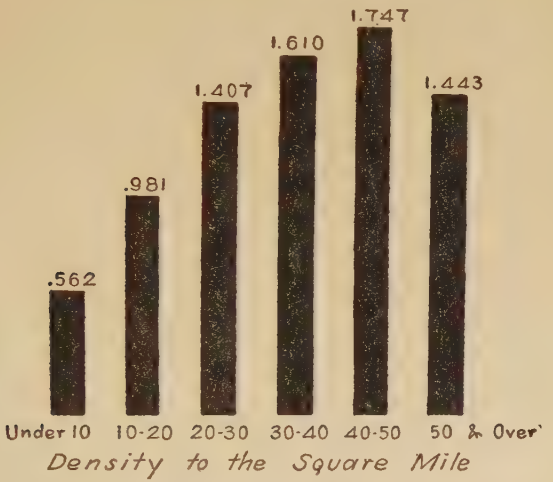


CHART VII—RELATION BETWEEN ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS AND THE DENSITY OF THE WHITE POPULATION IN THE VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY AREAS OF THE 32 COUNTIES

This table shows that on the whole the most sparsely populated counties are the ones in which people attend church least, the actual coefficient between density and attendance interest being $+.47 \pm .10$. In other words, the greater the density, the greater the monthly time contribution of individual inhabitants devoted to church. Even this correlation would be considerably higher were it not for the fact that after a certain point is reached, increased density apparently ceases to be an aid to church attendance. The trend is clearly shown in Chart VII.

This chart shows that in counties in which the density of population is less than ten persons to the square mile, the monthly individual attendance interest of the inhabitants averages a little more than half a service a month; but in those counties in which densities range from ten to twenty persons a square mile, the attendance interest jumps to nearly one service a month, and continues to rise, although at decreasing rate, until it reaches a maximum in the counties whose densities range from forty to fifty persons. But the counties in the last group, in which densities exceed fifty people to the square mile, show a decrease in the attendance interest ratio. This may be owing to the competition with commercial amusements which can hardly function in communities in which the population is less dense. In very sparsely settled areas, on the other hand, density is a hindrance because of the distances people have to travel to attend church.

The exact trend presented by our chart should not be interpreted too literally. The number of counties is too small to base final conclusions upon them. Nevertheless it does seem clear that up to a certain point, density is a real factor in limiting church attendance. It is one thing to attend church when it takes only five or ten minutes to go; it is quite another thing when the church is many miles away.

The distance to church as a deterrent to attendance is closely tied with another limiting factor—the opportunity for attendance which the church affords. That some counties offer greater opportunities to attend church than others offer is clearly seen in Table XVIII which shows the number of Sunday services of worship monthly for each 1,000 Protestant inhabitants.

This table shows that there is a three-and-one-half-fold variation in the number of Sunday services for each 1,000 inhabitants. If all these counties were equally populated and equally old, it might be assumed that any lack of opportunity to attend church was the fault of the people in any given area; for in these circumstances it could be argued that if the people were really interested in the church they would have provided churches to attend. It is not true

nevertheless that all of our thirty-two counties have had equal opportunities to establish churches. Our table shows

TABLE XVIII—NUMBER OF SUNDAY SERVICES OF WORSHIP MONTHLY FOR EACH 1,000 PROTESTANT INHABITANTS IN THE 32 COUNTIES

County	*State*	*Services per 1,000 Protestants*
Tompkins	N. Y.	18.3
Sedgwick	Kans.	17.8
Addison	Vt.	16.9
Hughes	S. D.	16.9
Clay	Iowa	14.7
Atchison	Mo.	14.4
Harford	Md.	14.0
Monroe	Ga.	13.8
Gem	Ida.	13.5
Wayne	Mo.	13.5
Orange	N. C.	12.9
Rockwall	Tex.	12.5
Columbia	Pa.	12.3
Jennings	Ind.	12.2
Miami	Ohio	11.5
Sheboygan	Wis.	11.4
Hardin	Ohio	11.1
Stanislaus	Cal.	10.9
Salem	N. J.	10.5
Blount	Tenn.	10.4
Benton	Ore.	9.8
Orange	Cal.	9.2
Durham	N. C.	7.9
Weld	Colo.	7.9
Skagit	Wash.	7.4
Colbert	Ala.	7.0
Union	N. Mex.	6.8
Price	Wis.	6.5
Beaverhead	Mont.	6.4
Sheridan	Wyo.	5.7
Pend Oreille	Wash.	5.5
Raleigh	W. Va.	5.2

that in general the newly settled, sparsely populated counties are those in which these opportunities are most lacking. In part, therefore, the poor showing of these counties can

be accounted for by the limited opportunities to attend church which they afford. Here then is an argument for furthering church extension. In the light of all the facts, it seems highly probable that church interest in these areas could be appreciably increased provided they were supplied with additional church facilities. Because of the semi-pioneer conditions in these areas, the inhabitants themselves are hardly in a position to bear the full expense of such a policy of expansion. From the standpoint of organized religion it is, therefore, only reasonable and just that the national denominational boards should assist local groups to organize new churches.

It is, of course, impossible to tell what part of the poor religious showing of these counties results from lack of opportunities to attend church, and what part is owing to the lack of religious interest on the part of the inhabitants; but granting that a sparse population and extreme youth are detrimental factors to church development over which the individual inhabitants have little or no control, we are forced to the conclusion that differences in religious interest of the members from county to county vary even less than our attendance interest ratios would indicate. In other words, if people from county to county had equal opportunities to attend churches, they would probably participate in their services with even greater uniformity than at present.

But this conclusion in no way invalidates the use of attendance interest as an index of church life. All we are trying to point out is that the place of the church in the life of an area is influenced in part by such purely environmental factors as density and age, and therefore that differences in church development from one locality to another should not be attributed entirely to the interest (or lack of interest) of the church members themselves.

PART II: COMPARING INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES

Chapter VI

COMPARABLE CHURCHES

The first part of this study was an attempt to analyze various standards for measuring churches. In the course of this discussion, a new yardstick was developed, based upon the average number of services a month that people devote to the church; for it is believed that in many respects attendance is a better unit for measuring church life than either money contributions or membership ratios, which in the past have been the two bases of measurement generally employed.

In contrast with Part I, the purpose of this part of our study is to correlate different series of data in order to find, if possible, some of the tendencies that operate in the field of the rural church. What, if any, are the effects of environment upon a church? Why do certain types of churches contribute more money than do other types? These are the specific questions with which this phase of the study deals.

The possible factors that influence the life of a church may be classified under two main heads: (1) environmental and (2) internal. Before proceeding therefore to compare two or more churches in order to discover the differences produced by factors within the churches themselves, it is essential that we should make sure that they are operating in comparable communities, otherwise it will be impossible to tell whether differences between them are owing to factors within the churches themselves or to *outside* influences. To illustrate, suppose a church situated in an old established New England village of 2,000 or 2,500 inhabitants were to be contrasted with a struggling mission located in a frontier community of 300 or 400 persons. In this case it would be impossible to tell what part of the

variations between them was owing to differences among the communities and what to differences among the churches. Therefore, if we are to ascertain the internal factors that make for differences between churches, it is necessary to confine our comparisons, so far as possible, to a group of rural churches operating in strictly comparable communities. But when are two communities comparable? When the cases are as extreme as the ones just mentioned, the problem is simple. Clearly these churches are not in the same class; but where shall we draw the line?

It is our belief that in the past grave errors and injustices have been committed by indiscriminate comparisons between churches. Until a decade ago it was the custom for denominational executives to compare one church with another irrespective of their geographical location, and even today this practice is all too common among many denominations. It was Dr. Warren H. Wilson who first called to the attention of church boards the need to discriminate between regions in the making of comparisons of this sort. For example, he pointed out that it was unreasonable to expect the same results from a church located in the Range country, as from one in a prosperous mid-western area. With the Interchurch the practice of regional comparisons was firmly established. For this purpose the United States was divided into nine major regions known as Colonial States, the South, the Southern Highland section, the Middle West, the Far West, the Prairie, the South West, the Range and the Pacific Coast.

In addition to region it also became customary to group town and country churches according to the population of the communities in which they are located. On this basis they are classified into three types known as town, village and open country churches. These distinctions have been followed in the rural studies previously published by this Institute.

Thus it becomes evident that region and density are two environmental factors generally recognized as directly affecting church life. Moreover, Part I of this study would confirm this opinion, for it was there demonstrated that

membership ratios vary regionally and that attendance interest is affected by density of population. Therefore, individual churches to be compared with one another, in order to find the internal factors that make for differences between the churches, should all be situated in the same major region of the United States with relatively the same density of population.

It is our contention, however, that in addition to these two criteria—region and density—it is necessary to take into account four other factors: (1) the economic conditions, (2) growth and decline of population, (3) race, and (4) occupation. Economic prosperity is an environmental factor that is extremely important; but one that has been generally neglected in making church comparisons. Certainly it is unfair to expect a church in the cut-over timber lands of northern Wisconsin and Michigan to do as well as one in a prosperous farming community a few hundred miles farther south. Yet if region and density are the only criteria for comparing churches, such injustices can easily occur; for both churches may be located in communities in the same major area and in comparable population centers.

THE EFFECT OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

It is our conviction based upon the evidence present in Part I, that economic conditions have a decided influence upon church life. Chapter II, for example, has shown that financial contributions to churches show a pronounced tendency to increase as economic conditions improve. Thus in order to be sure that increased contributions to one church are owing to an increase of religious interest on the part of the members and not to economic differences, it is essential that the two churches be in equally prosperous areas.

Our emphasis upon economic factors in church life should not be misinterpreted as indicating a belief that institutional religion is "economically determined." It is apparently not true that the amount of time that people devote to their churches tends to be greater in a wealthy com-

munity than in a poor one. Indeed, it can be proved statistically that this is not the case in our thirty-two counties. In Chapter III it has been shown that average farm values are a reasonably reliable index of the economic prosperity of village and open country areas. By subtracting the amount of time contributed to town churches from the total monthly attendance interest of each county, it is relatively easy to find the attendance interest ratio of the Protestant population in village and open country areas. If then the

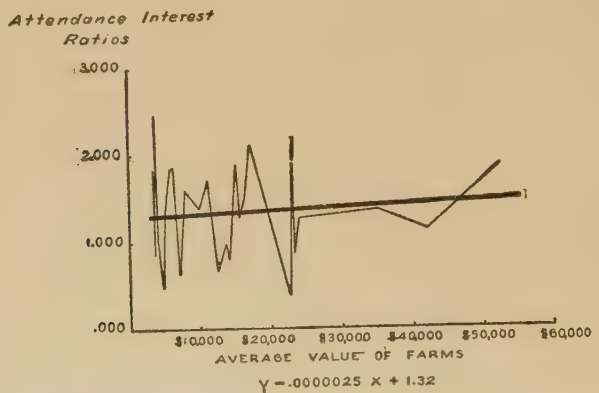


CHART VIII—CORRELATION OF ATTENDANCE INTEREST RATIOS AND AVERAGE FARM VALUES IN THE 32 COUNTIES

average farm value is correlated with the attendance interest ratio, the coefficient of correlation is $+.06 \pm .12$. This is a very low correlation ratio and indicates that there is no tendency for the two sets of data to fluctuate together; that is to say, there is no tendency for the church, as measured by our yardstick of attendance interest, either to increase or to decrease in importance as the economic conditions change. This lack of a definite trend is shown graphically in Chart VIII. If instead of farm values we use estimated cash incomes as our index of prosperity, our coefficient is $+.14 \pm .12$. The conclusion is clear that the amount of time that people devote to their churches

is not economically determined. Inhabitants of a poor county are just as likely to devote a relatively large average amount of time to church services as are inhabitants of rich counties. This is a very important point, for it indicates that economic considerations do not affect the religious life of an area in the way that many people have supposed.

Economic conditions, however, decidedly influence the financial side of church life. More than that, they directly affect the factors in a church's program dependent upon local contributions. For example, the quality of the church's pastoral leadership, while not directly a financial matter, is in a large part dependent upon the prosperity of the community in which the church is located. This statement can be proved by working out the proportion of resident ministers to churches in counties of varying wealth. For this purpose let us again turn to the ninety-six counties used in Chapter II and III, and let us begin by grouping them according to their economic prosperity as indicated by average farm values. In the first group we will put all the counties whose farm values are less than $5,000; in the second, those in which the values are from $5,000 to $10,000, etc. Then let us work out the proportion of resident ministers to churches in each group. The actual figures are given in Chart IX and show results for village and open country churches combined.

This chart shows that the poorer the counties the smaller the proportion of ministers who are resident. In counties whose farm values are under $5,000, only one out of six ministers in the village and open country areas is resident; or, in other words, is a pastor who lives within the parish area of his church. But in counties whose farm values are $20,000 or over, more than half the ministers are resident. The tendency becomes even more significant if the comparison is limited to full-time ministers only, that is, to pastors with no other occupations who devote their full time to a single church. In this case only 3 per cent. of the rural ministers in the poorest counties are full-time men, while the proportion is nearly one-third in the richest counties. This means an elevenfold differential between

the counties of the poorest group and those of the richest, and bears out the contention that as counties become more and more wealthy an ever-increasing proportion of the churches can afford to pay for the services of a full-time minister. Curiously enough the chart shows that the proportion of part-time resident pastors varies far less than that of full-time men. In the ninety-six counties here con-

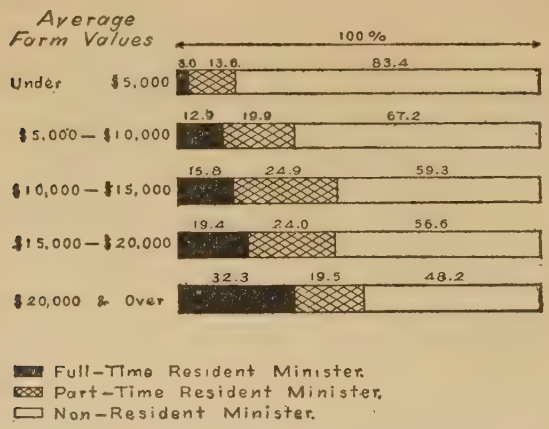


CHART IX—PROPORTION OF RESIDENT MINISTERS IN THE VILLAGE AND OPEN COUNTRY AREAS OF THE 96 COUNTIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AVERAGE FARM VALUES

sidered, the fluctuation in this respect is only from 13.6 per cent. to 24.9 per cent., or less than a one to two variation. The reason for this is simple. As the county becomes more prosperous, certain of its churches that formerly had non-resident ministers can afford part-time men; but at the same time a nearly equal number of churches that formerly had part-time ministers can afford full-time pastors. As a result, the ratio of part-time ministers is less affected by changes in wealth.

Our conclusion then is that the richer the county, the larger the proportion of ministers who are full-time resident. The tendency has a real bearing on church policy.

It has long been a slogan among church executives that every church should have a resident minister. This is probably a legitimate ideal; but it should be recognized that prosperous communities can attain the ideal far more readily than can those in poorer areas. Board secretaries might just as well face the fact that in poor counties this ideal is almost unattainable, unless, of course, it is made possible through Home Mission Aid. In view of the facts, it seems especially important that the available ministerial leadership be wisely distributed in poor counties. Instead of aiming at having as the standard in these areas, "a resident minister for every church," it might be better to have as the goal "a resident minister for every community." At least this idea would have the merit of being within the realm of possibility; and this is a real advantage since a standard that is totally unattainable is not even stimulating. With proper coöperation between denominations, it should be possible to approximate the standard of a resident minister in every community.

Since the proportion of resident ministers is apparently so largely affected by economic conditions, it is important to take this fact into consideration when comparing the religious interest of two areas. It has long been customary to use the per cent. of resident ministers as a basis of comparing the religious life of two counties. For example, to mention but one of a number of similar illustrations, Mr. Hermann N. Morse, when contrasting the ministerial leadership in Columbia County, Pennsylvania, and Harford County, Maryland, writes as follows: "Columbia County's 100 churches command the service, in whole or in part, of only thirty-eight ministers. . . . All but seven of these men serve at least two churches each, the largest circuits containing six churches.

"*Harford County makes a much better pastoral record.* Seventy-one churches there are served by thirty-nine pastors, only two of whom do not give full time to the ministry. The other three churches are of the denomination of Friends who customarily are without a paid ministry. Here, therefore, the ministers average but 1.8 churches per man.

Moreover, there are eleven ministers serving but a single church each and only twelve serving more than two." [1]

The italics are our own, but they emphasize the point. Harford County is supposed to "make a much better showing" than Columbia County; but does it? True, its churches have a large proportion of resident ministers; but is this not owing to greater economic prosperity rather than to increased religious interest? The Maryland County is considerably more prosperous than its neighbor in Pennsylvania. In Harford County the average value of the farms is more than $11,000, while in Columbia County it is less than $6,000, so that on the basis of economic conditions it is but natural that the rural churches in the former should have more resident ministers than the churches in the latter, since they have more money available to pay for them. It seems clear that differences between the ministerial leadership of these two counties are explained by differences in wealth rather than by religious apathy in Columbia County. The statement, therefore, that "Harford makes a much better showing," though true absolutely is not correct if one considers the relative sacrifices involved. If we use attendance interest ratios, rather than the proportion of resident ministers, as the index of religious interest, the two counties are nearly identical. Indeed Harford County actually makes a slightly poorer showing than Columbia County, for its monthly attendance interest ratio is 1.773, as compared with 1.857 for Columbia County. In this case, at least, the greater proportion of resident ministers in Harford County appears to be owing to increased economic prosperity rather than to increased religious interest. Of course, there are probably many counties in which the large number of resident ministers actually indicates greater religious interest on the part of inhabitants; but the point is that, until we know the relative prosperity of the two areas, it is impossible to determine definitely what part of these differences is owing to the increased interest of members and what part to economic conditions.

Up to this point the facts have revealed three environ-

[1] *The Country Church in Industrial Zones,* H. N. Morse, p. 61.

mental factors that influence church life. These are region, density of population and economic conditions. A fourth is the growth or decline in population. The effect of this factor has already been demonstrated in the first part of Chapter IV where it was proved that growth and decline in the church membership of town and country churches followed quite closely the population trends in these counties. This simply means that before one can fairly draw conclusions from the growth in membership in one group of churches with growth in membership in churches of another group, it is essential that both groups be located in communities where population trends are similar, otherwise it is impossible to say what part of the growth is owing to the effectiveness of the churches themselves and what part to a natural increase in membership occasioned by an increase in population. To take a concrete illustration, it would be wholly unfair to contrast the membership gains of rural churches on the Pacific Coast with those of churches in New England, because the town and country population of the Pacific Coast is rapidly growing while in many parts of New England it is steadily declining. It is not particularly to the credit of a church that it gains in membership if it is located in a community that is developing by leaps and bounds; while it may be a real achievement for a church merely to hold its own in an area whose population is declining.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FOREIGN-BORN

In addition to the four environmental factors just discussed, there are apparently two others that influence church life—the proportion of foreign-born in the population and the occupations of the people. Race would not be so important if our study had not been limited to Protestant churches only. In the circumstances, however, it is a real factor because it helps to determine the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in any community. The larger the proportion of foreign-born in a rural locality, the larger the number of Catholics bulks in proportion to

the county's total church membership. This can be proved from government sources. The Federal Census of 1920 gives the per cent. of foreign-born in each county of the United States, while the Religious Census of 1916 furnishes the church membership by denominations. Although these two enumerations were separated by approximately four years that interval is so short that we may properly use them to find the ratio of Catholics to total church membership in counties with varying proportions of foreign-born inhabitants. The specific questions we wish to answer are:

MAP III—LOCATION OF THE 220 COUNTIES

What per cent. of the church members are Catholics in counties where less than 5 per cent. of the people are foreign-born? What per cent. where the foreign-born equal 5 to 10 per cent. of the population and the like? In order to solve this problem we selected a group of 220 counties scattered widely over the United States. Their actual distribution is shown on the accompanying map. As there are 3,000 rural counties in the United States, our sample includes more than 7 per cent. of the total. Because this is strictly a comparative study of rural churches, our analysis has been entirely limited to the rural areas of these coun-

ties. This does not mean that our 220 cases were confined to counties that had no cities. In many cases it was possible to get rural figures by subtracting population totals of individual cities from county totals, because the Federal Religious Census gives specific data for all cities of 25,000 and over.

At first glance it may seem strange that so few southern counties were included in our sample; but the reason is that the Religious Census does not discriminate between the

TABLE XIX—PROPORTION OF FOREIGN-BORN TO THE RURAL WHITE POPULATION COMPARED WITH THE PROPORTION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS TO THE RURAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN 220 COUNTIES

Per Cent. of Foreign-Born by Groups	*No. of Counties*	*Per Cent. of Foreign-Born in the Population (1920 Federal Census)*	*Per Cent. of Roman Catholics in the Church Membership (1916 Religious Census)*
Less than 5.....	79	2.2	12.3
*Less than 1.....	*27*	*.4*	*5.8*
*1–5	*52*	*2.9*	*14.6*
5–10	53	7.6	24.2
10–15	40	12.4	29.4
15–20	26	17.5	40.8
20–25	10	22.5	51.4
25 and over	12	30.7	79.3

number of Negro and the number of white church members in an individual county. Since this study is confined to white churches it was felt necessary to throw out every county that had a Negro population of more than 2.5 per cent., because any area with more than this proportion of Negroes would probably have an appreciable percentage of Negro church members. This meant, of course, that virtually all southern counties had to be eliminated; but as there are very few Catholics in the South, this limitation only served to weaken rather than to strengthen the trend we are trying to prove; for had southern counties been included it would have been found that generally speaking they have very few foreign-born and very few Catholics.

However, even if we confine ourselves to our sample, the tendency for the proportion of Catholics to increase as the ratio of foreign-born increases, is shown in Table XIX.

This table shows that in the counties having less than 5 per cent. of their inhabitants foreign-born, the Roman Catholics in the counties' church membership make up roughly 12 per cent. Indeed, where the per cent. of aliens is less than 1 per cent. the Catholics comprise only 6 per cent. of the church members. As the proportion of foreign-born increases, however, the ratio of Catholics steadily increases until in the counties with the largest percentage of foreign-born the Roman Catholics equal four-fifths of all the counties' church members. The actual coefficient of correlation is $+.67 \pm .03$. For 220 cases this is a high degree of relationship. Thus we see that the proportion of foreign-born in a county directly affects the ratio between Protestants and Catholics.

OCCUPATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Finally let us turn to the occupation of the inhabitant. This is a more difficult influence to measure because the necessary data are not as yet available to prove its influence concretely. But long ago the theory was advanced that a person's occupation affects his religious outlook. For example, Thorstein Veblen in his *Instincts of Workmanship* has fully developed the thesis that a man's attitude toward God, as well as his whole outlook on life, is directly influenced by his method of making a living. The agriculturist, so argues Professor Veblen, is apt to be a religious man because he sees the miracles of nature all around him. He is constantly confronted by the uncertainties of wind and weather, all those aspects of life known to insurance companies as "acts of God," and is therefore inclined to be religious. The industrial worker, on the other hand, is in an entirely different atmosphere. The keynote of modern business is process. There is very little that is accidental or mysterious in the workings of a great industry. Things move relentlessly from causes to effects, and from effects

to causes. Thus the worker in this field is a materialist; and therefore, so it is argued, the industrial worker is less apt to be religiously inclined than is the agriculturist.

There is no need of our going into the argument further. This Institute, in connection with an investigation of the American village, expects to study at greater length in the near future, this hypothesis that occupation is a factor in church life. There is, however, one bit of evidence that can be presented at this time, which bears out this thesis. Early

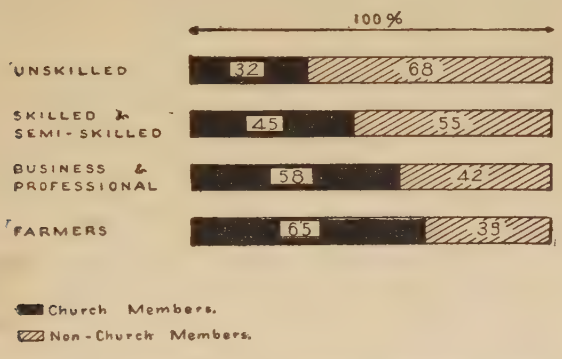


CHART X—PROPORTION OF CHURCH MEMBERS AMONG VARIOUS CLASSES OF THE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED INHABITANTS OF FOREST, OHIO

in 1920 the Town and Country Division of the Interchurch World Movement made a house to house canvass in Forest, Ohio, a village of 1,143 inhabitants, located in Hardin County, in the west central part of the State. This inquiry ascertained not only the religious connection of each inhabitant, but his occupation as well. In this case, therefore, it has been possible to study the interrelationship of church membership to occupation. For the purpose of this study the gainfully employed inhabitants were divided into four classes known as (1) unskilled laborers, (2) skilled and semi-skilled, (3) business and professional men, (4) farmers. Chart X gives the proportion of each of these classes that claim church membership and shows that about twice as large a proportion of farmers and business and pro-

fessional men are church members as are found among unskilled laborers. Of course, until further evidence has been presented, it may be stated only as a theory, not as a fact, that occupations influence institutional religion. However, the logic of the situation tends to confirm the hypothesis. Therefore we will make no mistake, pending further proof, by including it tentatively as a sixth environmental factor affecting church life.

Thus far our data have indicated that region, density, economic conditions, gain or loss of population, racial make-up and occupations, are six environmental factors that affect Protestant church life in rural areas. Region apparently influences the proportion of people who belong to church, or in other words, the traditionalism of being church members. Density affects church attendance, and economic conditions modify the financial side of its life, while the gain or the loss in population has an influence in increasing or in decreasing the number of people who join the church. The racial make-up of the people determines to a considerable extent the relation between Protestants and Catholics, and their occupations possibly modify the religious mindedness of men.

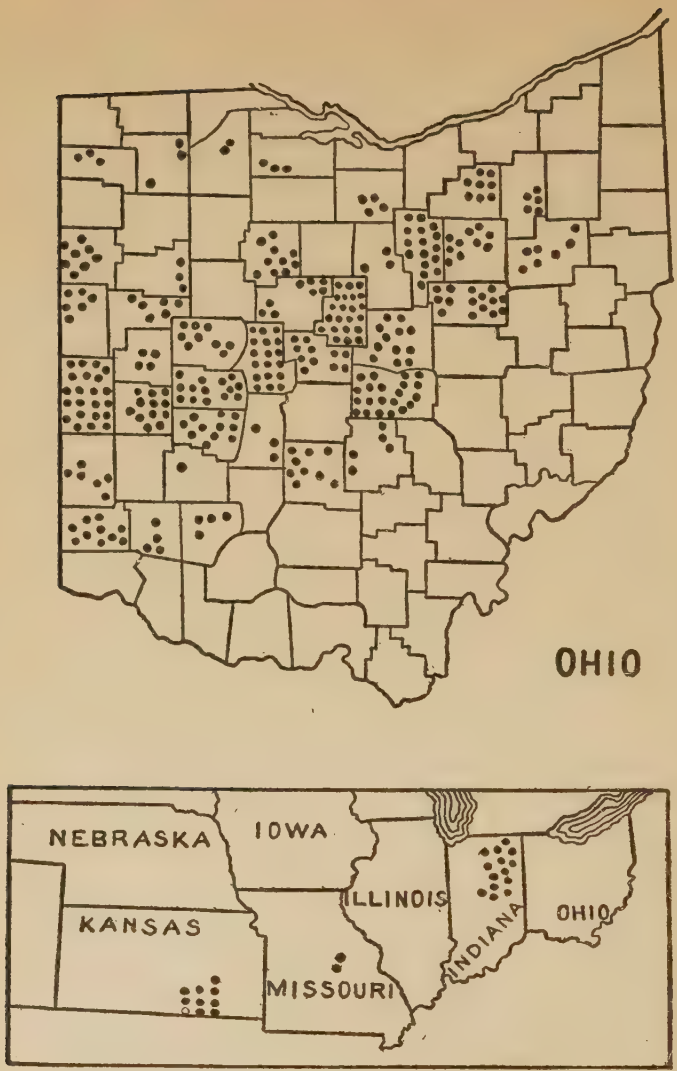
Of course, these six criteria are not separate and distinct factors but are themselves interrelated. For instance, the density of population no doubt influences economic conditions, and these in turn react not only upon density but also upon such other factors as the racial make-up of the people. Moreover, these six factors are probably not the only ones that affect church life, although we feel that they are the major ones. At least, our investigation has failed to reveal any others of significance. For example, an effort was made to check Mr. Gill's contention which is clearly implied in his book *Six Thousand Country Churches,* that illiteracy influences church life. Our investigation does not, however, bear out this conclusion. Illiteracy and attendance interest, for example, show a coefficient of correlation of only $+.10 \pm .12$, while illiteracy and the ratio of churches to white rural Protestant population give a coefficient of only $-.18 \pm .12$. Both of these ratios are too low to indi-

cate trends. In view of the evidence it is felt that the six environmental factors just enumerated are probably the most important outside influences affecting church life.

THE OPEN COUNTRY SAMPLE

Having demonstrated the half-dozen most significant environmental influences outside the church that tend to modify its life, we are now in a position to define what is meant by "comparable communities" from the religious standpoint. In the light of the previous discussion our answer must be: two churches are comparable when they are located in the same major region of America; in communities having much the same density of population; in places that are equally prosperous; where population trends are comparable, the racial make-up of the inhabitants much the same, and where the occupations of the people are alike.

With these factors in mind a search was made through the files of the Interchurch World Movement for the largest possible group of churches comparably situated in all these respects. After carefully analyzing the available material, it was found that the most inclusive sample could be secured for a group of open country churches situated in the Middle West, especially in Ohio. As to density, all the churches were limited to communities in which the population averaged twenty or more people to the square mile. This figure was chosen as the dead line because, as is indicated by Chart VII, density does not appear to be a limiting factor after that point has been reached. Moreover, all of the communities chosen had relatively stationary populations over the last ten years. Regarding the racial make-up of the people, no church was included if it was situated in a community where more than 10 per cent. of the inhabitants were foreign-born; because, as Table XIX shows, this per cent. means that only a small minority of the church members are Catholic. Finally, as to occupation and economic conditions, churches were limited to agricultural communities in which farm values averaged not more than $30,000 nor less than $10,000. The fact that a community was



MAP IV—LOCATION OF THE 349 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES

The upper map shows the distribution by counties of the 323 churches situated in Ohio, the lower map gives the location by states of the 26 churches outside of Ohio.

primarily agricultural was secured from the community schedules of the Interchurch World Movement, while the range of farm values was limited by selecting typical communities in counties whose farm values, as given by the Federal Census, were between these two extremes.

On this basis it was possible to secure a group of 349 churches comparably situated. Their actual distribution is shown in Map IV, while their denominational affiliations are as follows:

Denomination	*No. of Churches*
Adventist	
Adventist Christian	3
Seven Day Adventist	2
Baptist	21
Christian	23
Church of Christ	9
Church of God	5
Congregational	4
Disciples of Christ	7
Evangelical Association	10
Federated	1
Friends	8
Interdenominational	1
International Holiness	1
Lutheran	19
Mennonite	2
Methodist *	
Free Methodist	1
Methodist Episcopal	135
Methodist Protestant	11
Wesleyan Methodist	2
Non-denominational	1
Presbyterian	23
Progressive Brethren	1
Reformed	13
Union	1
United Brethren	41
Universalist	4
	349

* The proportion of Methodist churches in this sample may appear unduly high but according to figures published by Gill and Pinchot in *Six Thousand Country Churches*, 36 per cent. of all the white Protestant churches in rural Ohio are of this denomination. This compares with 43 per cent. in our sample.

Here then we have a group of approximately 350 churches located in highly comparable situations. Since all are located in similar communities, it is safe to assume that differences between them are owing to factors within the churches themselves rather than to outside influences. The following chapters of this part of the study will be devoted to an effort to analyze these churches in order that we may discover some of the factors that bring about differences among them.

Chapter VII

CHURCH FINANCE

Having assembled a group of 349 similarly situated open country churches, the next step is to compare different types in an endeavor to find some of the factors *within* the churches themselves that make for differences between the churches. Take the question of membership. Does the fact that a church has many members, or that it has few members, influence other aspects of its life? This is a question that has led to endless discussion among church men. One group has argued that the denominations should encourage the development of churches of large membership, while others have been equally certain that churches of smaller membership are preferable. Thus far the argument has been conducted almost entirely on a subjective basis, so that neither side has been able to convince the other. Let us see whether it is possible to deal with this matter objectively. We will begin with the question of contributions. How, if at all, does the number of members a church has, affect the average individual donations of its members?

Part I has already shown that a most important factor in determining the contributions of members to their churches is difference in economic prosperity. The tendency, which has already been demonstrated in Chapter II, is for average individual contributions of members to increase as the wealth of the region increases. But this tendency is not a determining factor in the churches here considered; for all are located in communities whose economic conditions are to a high degree similar. Not only are they situated within the same major region, where farm values are much the same, but they are situated in communities dependent largely upon agriculture as their chief source of wealth. In short, all have much the same economic foundations for their

existence. This means that variations in average contributions among different types of churches are not traceable to differences in the economic prosperity of the areas. This, indeed, was one of the main considerations upon which the communities were selected.

THE EFFECT OF MEMBERSHIP

Since economic conditions are constant, we must turn to other causes to explain fluctuations in the average contributions of members of these churches. Does the fact that a church has a small membership mean that its members give more money or less money than the members of a large church? Obviously the total contributions are less in a church of small membership than in one with many members; but in the small church are the average contributions of individual members more or less? To answer this question we must limit ourselves to the money the church itself raises; for clearly it would be unfair to credit a church with funds its members had not themselves contributed, such as the amounts received from its denomination in the form of Home Mission Aid. For much the same reason, income from endowment should also be eliminated, for here again we are dealing with funds the church members themselves do not contribute.

In addition to the money eliminated because it comes from sources outside the local church, there are the contributions for new buildings, which, even though raised in part at least by the church members, must be left out of account when we are comparing the average individual contributions of members of two churches. Generally speaking, a new building is an unusual outlay that demands unusual contributions. During the year when the new building is under construction, expenses of this sort naturally tend to raise the average contributions. It is, therefore, unfair to compare the per capita contributions of a church that is putting up a new building with the contributions of one that is not; for a few years later the second church may be involved in a similar expense while the first is not.

It might be argued that expenditures for this purpose tend to neutralize one another in a comparison of several hundred churches. If our sample were many times its present size, this would probably be the case; for it would follow through probability and chance that the churches of one size-group would not do disproportionately more building than those of another. But, in the case of the 349 churches with which we are now dealing, it so happens that during the year prior to the survey the churches with fifty to 100 members, and those with 150 and over, actually did considerably more building than churches with fewer than fifty members, and than those with 100 to 150. This, of course, tended to raise the average individual contributions of members of the first two groups in relation to those of the second two. The amounts spent for new buildings by the churches with fewer than fifty members each, was zero; those having from fifty to ninety-nine members each, spent $2.25 a member; the 100 to 149 group contributed an average of $.67 a member for this purpose, while the average for the churches with over 150 was $5.40. It may be that churches of a certain size usually erect more new buildings than others; but certainly these figures do not indicate a definite trend. Therefore the amounts raised for new buildings have been entirely excluded in all cases. If then we take the contributions that the local church itself raises for purposes other than the construction of new buildings, what do we find? Table XX gives the answer for 329 of our 349 churches. The other twenty had to be eliminated because the necessary data were lacking.

In this table, and indeed throughout this part of the report, churches were classified according to their *resident* membership, as this seemed the fairest basis for comparing one church with another. In Part I, it will be recalled, we employed *active* membership figures, because there we were dealing with groups of churches in all parts of the United States and therefore wanted to use a membership figure that, so far as possible, would mean the same thing from one locality to another. For that purpose active membership figures were best. When comparing individual churches

within the same region, however, it is significant to include the "dead wood" as well as the active members; otherwise a church with a relatively large number of inactive members might make a disproportionately good showing. For this reason, our individual comparisons of churches are based upon resident membership figures.

From this table it is evident that the larger the church the larger its total budget; but that as far as individual contributions are concerned, the members of small churches give

TABLE XX—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF 329 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Number of Resident Members	*Total No. of Churches*	*Average No. of Resident Members*	*Average Contributions of A Church*	*A Member*
1–49	101	33	$ 474.79	$14.21
*1–24	*21*	*18*	*346.06*	*19.07*
*25–49	*80*	*37*	*508.59*	*13.59*
50– 99	126	72	851.48	11.76
100–149	79	118	1,290.61	10.91
150 and over...	23	179	2,109.42	11.79
Total	329	79	$ 929.23	$11.78

more on the average than the members of churches with large enrollments. In churches with fewer than fifty members the contribution is $14.21 a member, while in those with fewer than twenty-five it is $19.07. This compares with $10.91 for the churches with memberships of from 100 to 150 and $11.79 for the largest size-group; and it means that it takes on the average nearly two-thirds more money from each member to operate the churches that have fewer than twenty-five members than to operate churches that have memberships of 150 or more.

The explanation of this lies in the fact that the small church, from a purely financial point of view, is an expensive operating unit. The ordinary church program requires that members secure the services of a minister and keep the church building in repair, besides meeting certain denomi-

national assessments. If the membership is very small, these few people must meet these basic requirements or disband. Thus, in a church of small membership, giving on a relatively large scale is a necessity; while in a church with many members the expenses are spread over the larger number and therefore involve less cost to the individual.

Curiously enough this explanation is much the same as that we discovered when contrasting the average contributions of individual members in rich and in poor counties. It will be recalled that in a poor county the need of making large financial sacrifices was pressing. Only by giving a relatively high proportion of their total income could the church members in impoverished regions maintain themselves as a church. Fundamentally the same situation prevails between churches with few members and similarly located churches with many members. As the church membership increases, the need for the individual member to make large financial sacrifices becomes less and less immediate; because even relatively small contributions from a large number of members produce more actual money than larger individual contributions from few people. This hypothesis is further borne out if we break up the contributions to see how the money is actually expended.

Table XXI summarizes the annual budgets of the 329 churches grouped according to number of members. Let us study separately each item entering into this statement. The first column, labeled "salaries," gives the average cost of pastoral leadership for churches of varying size, and shows that although the amount paid for the services of a pastor steadily increases as the membership of the churches becomes larger, these increases do not keep pace with the growth in membership; so that the individual members of the church with fewer than fifty members pay nearly 75 per cent. more for this item than is paid by the average member of a large church. The same is true of "upkeep." By this term is meant the cost of keeping the building in repair, lighting and heating the church, etc., etc. Here again the individual member of the church of small

membership is forced to pay considerably more than is paid by a member of a church with many members. For example, per capita maintenance expenses are nearly three times

TABLE XXI—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SALARY, UPKEEP AND BENEVOLENCES IN 329 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

AVERAGE FOR A CHURCH

Number of Members	*Running Expenses*			*Missions and Benevolences*	*Surplus*	*Total Contributions*
	Salaries *	*Upkeep*	*Total*			
1–49	$281.20	$ 76.47	$ 357.67	$114.43	$ 2.69	$ 474.79
1–24	*205.99*	*78.92*	*284.91*	*60.91*	*.24*	*346.06*
25–49	*300.95*	*75.82*	*376.77*	*128.48*	*3.34*	*508.59*
50– 99	452.51	150.12	602.63	238.35	10.50	851.48
100–149	696.76	216.08	912.84	358.84	18.93	1,290.61
150 and over	859.30	290.76	1,150.06	919.32	40.40	2,109.42
Total	$487.01	$153.18	$640.19	$276.85	$12.19	$929.23

AVERAGE FOR A MEMBER

1–49	$8.42	$2.29	$10.71	$3.42	$.08	$14.21
1–24	*11.35*	*4.35*	*15.70*	*3.36*	*.01*	*19.07*
25–49	*8.04*	*2.03*	*10.07*	*3.43*	*.09*	*13.59*
50– 99	6.25	2.07	8.32	3.29	.15	11.76
100–149	5.89	1.83	7.72	3.03	.16	10.91
150 and over	4.80	1.63	6.43	5.14	.22	11.79
Total	$6.17	$1.94	$8.11	$3.51	$.16	$11.78

* These figures do not include gifts or perquisites paid in cash or in kind but they do include the negligible number of cases in which payments in kind are a part of the minister's salary.

as much in a church of fewer than twenty-five members, than in a church of 150 or more, being $4.35 in the former and $1.63 in the latter.

In the next column, the two items, "salaries" and "upkeep," have been combined under a heading "total running expenses." These figures show that even though a church

with few members spends only approximately $350 for these items, the average cost to the individual member is $10.71. The churches of largest membership, on the other hand, can afford to pay more than $1,150 for the salary of the minister and the upkeep of the building, while the cost to the member is appreciably less, being only $6.43. The actual coefficient of correlation between the number of members of a church and its average individual running expenses a member is $-.34 \pm .03$. For a sample of 329 cases, this indicates a significant trend. To meet these expenses the church with fewer than fifty members must pay 60 per cent. more a person than the large churches; while the churches with fewer than twenty-five members have to pay more than twice as much. This is true despite the fact, as we shall prove later on, that the large church is able to command far more adequate leadership than is the small church.

Turning next to "missions and benevolences" we find that, with the exception of the group having the largest membership, the average individual contributions of members are remarkably uniform. One might imagine that the smaller churches, because of the large per capita running expenses, would have less money available to donate to denominational enterprises. This is not the case, however, to any appreciable extent. The churches with fewer than fifty members contribute more money a member than those with from fifty to 100 members, or than those with 100 to 150 members. The largest churches are the only ones that show a material increase in the average individual donations of their members for this purpose. At least a partial explanation of this rather surprising phenomenon lies in the fact that a small church, in spite of its increased running expenses, is usually asked to contribute exactly the same amount of money a member for these items as a large church.

In the light of this analysis, it would seem advisable for church boards to increase their per capita assessments on the churches with the larger memberships. Certainly a big church can as well afford to give considerably larger appropriations, as a small church can now afford to meet its pres-

ent assessments. Suppose, for example, that the members of these 329 churches, small and large alike, should make an average individual contribution of $14.13, which is the amount, excluding an average surplus of eight cents, that the members of churches with fewer than fifty persons now contribute. Then, assuming that running expenses were to remain unchanged, the per capita amounts available for benevolences, as contrasted with the present expenditures for this purpose would be as shown in Table XXII.

TABLE XXII—ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO MISSIONS AND BENEVOLENCES IN 329 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Number of Members	*Present Expenditures A Member*	*Possible* Expenditures A Member*
1– 49	$3.42	$3.42
50– 99	3.29	5.81
100–149	3.03	6.41
150 and over	5.14	7.70

* If each church gave $14.13 a member, which is the average amount now contributed by churches with less than 50 members.

On this basis the actual expenditures of these 329 churches to benevolent enterprises would be increased 78 per cent. This table undoubtedly presents an impossible ideal; but the ideal can be attained in part by a change in the method of apportioning money for benevolent purposes. Since it is clear from the analysis that the large churches are able to meet increased per capita obligations, it might be desirable to assess them in accordance with a sliding scale, so that churches of large membership would be asked to give larger donations a member than small churches.

Thus far we have shown that churches with few members cost appreciably more per capita to operate than the large churches; and therefore that, on a financial basis, small churches are relatively expensive operating units. Secondly, that a large church, compared with the small churches, does not live up to its maximum financial possi-

bilities. Of our 329 open country churches, at least, this is true.

CHECKING CONCLUSIONS

For the purpose of checking these conclusions, it was decided to turn to other groups of churches so that we might see whether the same tendencies would again show themselves. As our first checking sample, we selected a group of 100 churches situated in communities in which farm

TABLE XXIII—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TWO GROUPS OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP AND THEIR ECONOMIC LOCATION

	Churches Located in Counties Where Average Farm Value Falls Between			
	$5,000–$10,000		*$10,000–$30,000*	
Number of Members	*Average Contributions of A Church*	*A Member*	*Average Contributions of A Church*	*A Member*
1– 49	$ 446.67	$13.36	$ 474.79	$14.21
50– 99	680.69	9.11	851.48	11.76
100–149	1,055.64	8.95	1,290.61	10.91
150 and over.....	1,499.45	8.41	2,109.42	11.79
Total	$741.89	$9.57	$929.23	$11.78

values were appreciably lower than in the communities of the church group just discussed. In every other respect, however, these churches and those of the other sample were comparably situated. Indeed, they were nearly all taken from the material gathered when the first sample was being selected, but which had to be discarded because economic conditions as indicated by farm values fell below the standard set as the minimum. All of them are, however, churches in the Middle West, most of them in Ohio, in open country communities of about the same density of population, where farming is the main source of income and where a large majority of the people are native-born. The only real dif-

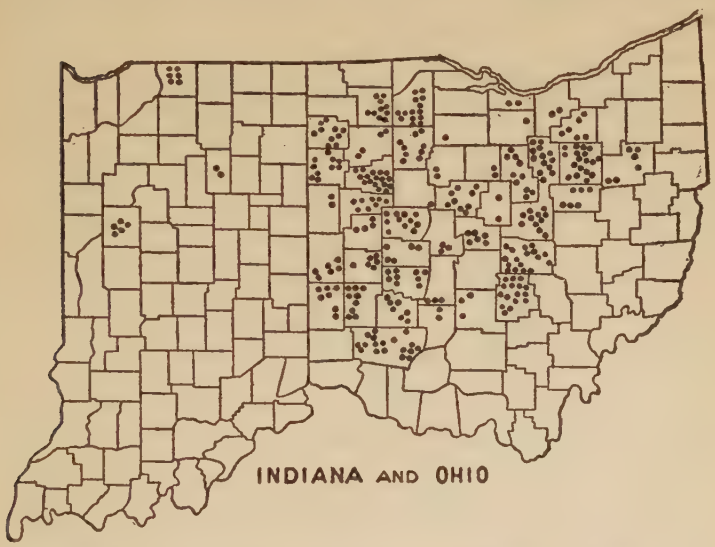
ference between the two sets of churches is that in the former group, all were located in areas where farm values fell between $10,000 and $30,000, while all in the present group are situated where average farm values fall between $5,000 and $10,000. If the previous conclusions be correct, we should expect these two groups to show the same tendencies, except that the members of the churches in the second sample would give less money because the churches are located in less prosperous areas. This is exactly what is shown in Table XXIII, which presents side by side summary figures for the two samples.

This table makes it clear not only that members of the churches in the poor communities give less money than their more prosperously situated neighbors, but also that in the second sample, just as in our earlier one, the churches of small membership contribute more money a member than the larger ones. Here then we have additional evidence both that economic conditions directly affect church life and that on a per capita basis small churches are more costly to operate than are large ones. This particular proof of the effect of economic conditions upon church finance is especially convincing because the churches in both samples are located in communities alike in every respect except their economic status. Indeed, to a large extent, the two groups of churches lie side by side. This means that differences between the two sets of churches could not be owing to differences in religious tradition or to regional differences in church life. The only reasonable explanation is that they are brought about by variations in economic prosperity.

THE SMALL-VILLAGE SAMPLE

Turning now to a second checking sample, it was decided to select another group of churches that in every respect would be comparable to the original 349 churches, except that this new set should be located in villages rather than in open country communities. The aim here was to ascertain whether churches situated in slightly different environments would show the same tendencies as the open country

churches, or different tendencies. According to definition, a village is a population center having between 251 and 2,500 inhabitants, so that we would have been justified in including any churches located in places of this size provided the other factors, such as region, racial make-up of population and economic conditions, were comparable. In selecting this sample, however, the term " village" was lim-



MAP V—LOCATION OF THE 331 SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES

ited to places of between 251 and 750 inhabitants. This restriction was made because we wish to be absolutely certain that any differences between the churches are owing to factors within the churches themselves or, in other words, are not due to fluctuations in the environmental situation. At present we do not know whether a village of 2,000 or 2,500 inhabitants is religiously comparable with a village of say 500 population. In order, therefore, to be on the safe side, the term "village" was restricted to places having between 251 and 750 inhabitants; because it was felt that small villages that varied only between these extremes would be

more strictly comparable. The actual location of the churches utilized in this small village sample is presented in Map V. The number of churches included is 331, all but thirteen of which are located in Ohio. As to denominations they are as follows:

Baptist	15	Methodist *	
Christian	16	Free	1
Church of Christ	14	Methodist Episcopal	115
Church of God	6	Methodist Protestant	10
Congregational	6	Nazarene	1
Disciples of Christ	13	Presbyterian	29
Evangelical Association	10	Progressive Brethren	4
Friends	4	Reformed	15
International Holiness	2	United Brethren	35
Lutheran	30	Universalist	1
Mennonite	4		
		Total	331

* The proportion of Methodist churches in this sample may appear unduly high but according to figures published by Gill and Pinchot in *Six Thousand Country Churches*, 36 per cent. of all white Protestant churches in rural Ohio are of this denomination. This compares with 38 per cent. in our sample.

We are now in a position to inquire whether the tendencies found in our open country churches appear again in these 331 small-village churches. Since all the churches are located in communities having the same economic foundation, we can again assume that differences in money contributions are not owing to differences in the prosperity of the areas in which the churches are situated.

An analysis of these churches on the basis of their memberships, reaffirms the tendency of the small church to give more money a member than the large church. Indeed, the differences are even more marked than in the open country sample, as is evident in Chart XI, which plots for each size-group the "usual" contributions a member raised by the local people themselves.

Here we find the church with fifty members giving nearly two-thirds more per capita than the one with 200 members, which again furnishes proof of the tendency for the individual to give in proportion to his responsibility for the con-

tinuance of the church. The difference between small and large churches is again made clearer by breaking down the total contributions into their constituent elements, as in Table XXIV.

This table shows very clearly that the average member's share of the expenses necessary to run a church decreases as the number of members of the church increases. In the

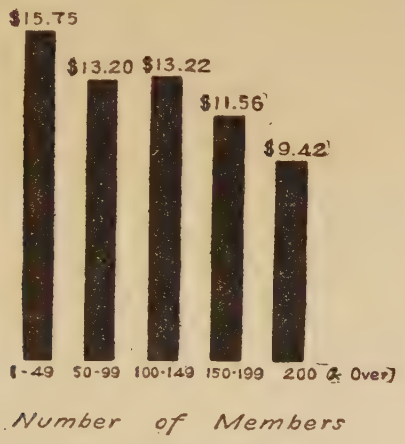


CHART XI—RELATION BETWEEN AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND SIZE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN 331 SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES

matter of salaries, the per capita cost of ministerial service for a church of over 200 members is less than half that of the churches of very small memberships. Nevertheless, the large church can afford to pay $1,150 for ministerial leadership, while the smaller can afford approximately only $325. The advantage of the church of large membership is also seen in connection with "upkeep." Where a church with fewer than fifty members must spend $2.34 a member for this purpose, the larger church can cut this item to $1.70. If we actually correlate the average individual contribution of members devoted to running expenses, with the num-

ber of members of the church, the coefficient is —.37 ±.03. This again shows a significant trend.

The conclusion is clear. The number of members which a church has is a factor that directly influences the financial

TABLE XXIV—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SALARY, UPKEEP AND BENEVOLENCES IN 331 SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

AVERAGE FOR A CHURCH

Number of Members	*Running Expenses*			*Missions and Benevolences*	*Surplus or Deficit*	*Total Contributions*
	Salary	*Upkeep*	*Total*			
1–49	$ 326.01	$ 70.68	$ 396.69	$ 75.22	+ $4.00	$ 475.91
1–24 ..	*166.63*	*35.31*	*201.94*	*38.40*	+ *7.72*	*248.06*
25–49 ..	*400.01*	*87.11*	*487.12*	*92.31*	+ *2.27*	*581.70*
50– 99	545.62	216.94	762.56	235.75	— 1.41	996.90
100–149	756.81	314.52	1,071.33	509.05	+ 13.66	1,594.04
150–199	963.19	360.54	1,323.73	667.42	— 35.65	1,955.50
200 and over.	1,147.52	453.61	1,601.13	964.92	— 50.56	2,515.49
Total ...	$731.91	$282.79	$1,014.70	$465.71	—$10.00	$1,470.41

AVERAGE FOR A MEMBER

1–49	$10.79	$2.34	$13.13	$2.49	+ $.14	$15.75
1–24 ..	*11.77*	*2.50*	*14.27*	*2.71*	+ *.55*	*17.53*
25–49 ..	*10.62*	*2.31*	*12.93*	*2.45*	+ *.06*	*15.44*
50– 99	7.23	2.87	10.10	3.12	— .02	13.20
100–149	6.28	2.61	8.89	4.22	+ .11	13.22
150–199	5.69	2.13	7.82	3.95	— .21	11.56
200 and over.	4.30	1.70	6.00	3.61	— .19	9.42
Total ...	$5.84	$2.26	$8.10	$3.72	$—.08	$11.74

side of its life. In churches of small membership, giving becomes a life or death matter to the church, and the individual members therefore make comparatively large sacrifices; while in a church of large membership, the costs of operation are borne by a larger number and thus less money is required from each member.

EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP

The size of a church's membership, although important, is not the only cause of the differences in the average individual contributions of church members. Indeed, the number of members is a factor that has scarcely been recognized as a determinant of per capita donations. In the past, a church's leadership and the financial systems employed, have been the factors particularly emphasized as making for differences. It has been repeatedly shown that churches with resident ministers give considerably larger contributions a member than ones with non-resident men, and that churches with "efficient" systems of finance give more than those with inefficient systems.

The usual way of demonstrating the effect of leadership upon finance is to contrast the average individual contributions of members of a group of churches having resident ministers with similar contributions from a group having non-resident pastors. For instance, B. Y. Landis, in *Sedgwick County, Kansas; a Church and Community Survey,* writes as follows:

> In each village church having a resident pastor, the rate of annual per capita contributions is $24.19; where the pastor is non-resident, it is $22.18. . . . In each open country church with a resident pastor, the rate of per capita giving is $39.40; where the pastor is non-resident it is $17.84.

The implication is that the differences between the two types of churches are owing solely to the presence or absence of resident ministers; but to prove that leadership is the only cause of the difference between these two averages, it must be shown that the two groups of churches are alike in all essentials except with respect to the presence or absence of resident pastors. Yet are these two groups thus similar? May not size as well as leadership be a factor making for differences between them? It is apparently true that the extent of a church's pastoral leadership is owing largely to the number of its members, so that churches with resident pastors generally have larger memberships than

those without resident ministers. The relation of large or small membership to ministerial leadership is shown in Table XXV.

These figures make it evident that the smaller the church membership the smaller the percentage of resident ministers. In the open country churches, the proportion of resident ministers jumps from 14 per cent. in the churches with fewer than fifty members, to 78 per cent. in the group of

TABLE XXV—PROPORTION OF RESIDENT MINISTERS IN CHURCHES OF VARYING MEMBERSHIP

	Churches							
	329 Open Country				*331 Small-Village*			
	With Resident Minister		*Without Resident Minister*		*With Resident Minister*		*Without Resident Minister*	
Number of Members	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1–49	15	14	92	86	9	22	32	78
1–24 ...	*2*	*8*	*23*	*92*	*3*	*23*	*10*	*77*
25–49 ...	*13*	*16*	*69*	*84*	*6*	*21*	*22*	*79*
50– 99	38	31	86	69	58	58	42	42
100–149	41	55	34	45	63	75	21	25
150–199	18	78	5	22	53	90	6	10
200 and over..	...	..	...	..	46	98	1	2
Total	112	34	217	66	229	69	102	31

largest membership; while in the villages the range runs from 23 per cent. in the smallest churches to 98 per cent. in the largest. The conclusion becomes evident. The fact that a church has a resident minister is determined to a considerable extent by the number of members the church has. Thus when one compares the per capita contributions of churches with resident ministers and those of churches without resident men, one is in reality (although not aware of the fact perhaps) taking into consideration not only leadership but the number of members as well. For example, an analysis of our 329 open country churches shows that the average membership of the churches with non-resident ministers is 66, while the

average of those with resident pastors is 104 persons. In the small-village sample, the "non-resident" churches have an average membership of 72, compared with 153 in our resident-minister group. In other words, the churches with resident ministers are nearly twice the size of those with non-resident men. This fact alone would lead one to expect that the average individual contributions of members of the two groups would differ since, as already proved, the larger

TABLE XXVI—AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SALARY, UPKEEP AND BENEVOLENCES IN OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES THAT HAVE RESIDENT MINISTERS COMPARED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS IN SIMILAR CHURCHES THAT HAVE NON-RESIDENT MINISTERS

	Salary		*Upkeep*		*Benevolences*		*Total*	
Number of Members	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*
1–49	$11.00	$ 8.34	$3.30	$2.01	$4.89	$3.47	$19.19	$13.82
1–24 ..	*24.00*	*10.71*	*2.78*	*5.23*	*3.97*	*3.90*	*30.75*	*19.84*
25–49 ..	*10.11*	*8.01*	*3.34*	*1.58*	*4.95*	*3.42*	*18.40*	*13.01*
50– 99	7.27	5.77	2.08	2.18	4.12	3.02	13.47	10.97
100–149	6.63	4.66	2.17	1.53	3.81	2.61	12.61	8.80
150 and over.	5.27	2.88	1.82	.67	5.80	2.41	12.90	5.96

(In every case the pastors of these churches devote their full time to the ministry.)

the membership the less the average contribution of the members. Thus it is evident that the number of members and the leadership may both be factors that affect the average contributions of church members.

To determine the effect of leadership upon individual donations it is necessary, therefore, to eliminate differences with respect to the number of members. This can be done most easily by limiting the comparison to churches that are strictly comparable with respect to membership. In order to make our comparisons still more precise, let us confine them to churches whose pastors devote their full time to the ministry.

Table XXVI shows that the average individual contributions of the members of churches with resident pastors tend to be considerably higher than those of similar churches that employ non-resident men. Moreover, these increases cannot be wholly explained by the fact that it takes more money to employ a resident than a non-resident minister; for the churches with resident leadership give appreciably larger donations a member to "upkeep" and "benevolences" as well as to "salaries." The same tendencies are present in our village sample, as is evident in Chart XII.

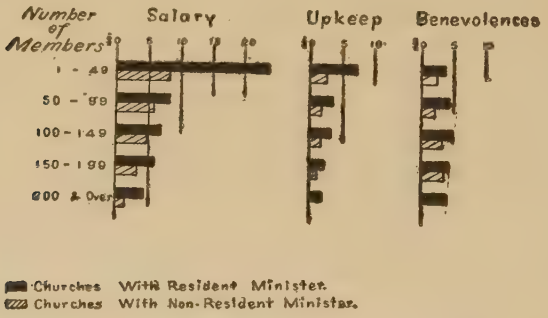


CHART XII—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS A MEMBER OF SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES WITH RESIDENT AND WITH NON-RESIDENT MINISTERS

Of course, the differences in these average contributions of individual members can be accounted for in part by the fact that the churches with resident pastors are probably ones with relatively enthusiastic and interested members; otherwise they would not go to the expense of hiring a resident man but would content themselves with a less expensive non-resident leader. Despite this fact, however, there is little doubt that the minister himself tends to account for part of these differences in the average donations of the members. In other words leadership, although closely interrelated with membership, is itself a factor that causes individual contributions to vary.

LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

As leadership is an important factor influencing the average individual contributions of members, it is essential that we reconsider for a moment the interrelationship of a church's total membership and its per capita contributions, since our earlier discussion of this point did not take into consideration variations in the amount of pastoral leadership of the churches of different membership groups. Therefore, the question may arise whether the differences in average individual donations, which in our earlier analysis were attributed to differences in total membership, were not owing, in part at least, to differences in leadership. A glance at our last table and chart makes it obvious, however, that in both our resident and non-resident groups of churches, the average contributions of individual members devoted to salary and upkeep, decrease as membership increases. Indeed, the tendencies seem even more marked than in Tables XXI and XXIV where similar averages were shown for all churches—resident and non-resident combined. Fortunately the method of correlation makes it possible to ascertain with certainty whether the tendencies really are more marked or not. All that is necessary is to correlate total church membership and average individual contributions, first for the group of churches with resident ministers and then for the non-resident group; and then to compare these results with the coefficient based upon all churches combined. As before, let us limit the comparisons to the per capita amounts of money devoted to running expenses only. On this basis the coefficient, which for all open country churches was $-.34 \pm .03$, becomes $-.39 \pm .05$ for those with non-resident pastors, and $-.46 \pm .06$ for the resident group. In the village sample, the coefficient, which for all churches was $-.37 \pm .03$, becomes $-.45 \pm .15$ for churches with non-resident men and $-.54 \pm .04$ for the resident group. In other words, we find that the degree of interrelationship between the number of church members and per capita contributions is closer when the comparison is limited to churches with resident ministers or to those with non-resident minis-

ters, than when the comparison is based upon all churches combined. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that the more nearly similar the leadership of the churches, the higher the coefficient of correlation between the number of members and the average individual contributions of members. For example, it was possible to correlate the interrelation of membership and individual donations in a group of sixty-two small-village churches, each of whose pastors devoted his full time to one church. In this case the coefficient of correlation rose to $-.62 \pm .05$. Thus, it becomes evident that if we take into consideration the difference between churches in the matter of pastoral leadership, the tendency for per capita contributions to decrease with increasing membership becomes more, rather than less, pronounced.

EFFECT OF FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

A final factor remains to be considered—the influence of financial systems upon individual contributions. This is a second influence that has been constantly held up as an important factor in determining the average amount of the contributions of members. It has often been "demonstrated" that the presence or absence of an "efficient" financial system has a very decided effect upon the average annual per capita contributions. This term "efficient system" is usually applied in the case of a church that tithes, or to one that employs a budget for all monies raised and an every-member canvass.

The customary way of demonstrating the influence of such systems is to compare the average individual contributions of a group of churches that have efficient financial systems, with another group of churches that do not. This procedure is entirely correct, provided it can be successfully maintained that the presence or absence of such a system is the only important point of difference between the churches of the two groups compared. But it often happens that other factors creep into these comparisons and influence the final result to such an extent that the figures give a dis-

torted impression. For example, it happens that the churches with resident ministers employ efficient systems of finance to a larger extent than do the churches with non-resident pastors. This is the case in at least both of our samples and means, of course, that an average group of churches with efficient systems usually has a larger proportion of resident ministers than a group with inefficient systems. It follows, therefore, that the average contributions of individual members of the churches with efficient systems, when compared with those with inefficient systems, will be influenced by this fact as well as by the financial system employed. In other words, any difference between the two averages is the result of at least two variables, so that to attribute the entire difference to the effect of financial systems alone is decidedly misleading.

In addition to the residence of the minister, the number of members is also a factor in the situation. An analysis of our two samples shows that the larger its membership, the more likely a church is to have an efficient system of finance. Here, then, is another factor that influences the average individual contributions of churches with efficient financial systems, as contrasted with those having inefficient systems; and it means that before it is possible to determine accurately the effect of system upon church finance, it is important that the two groups of churches be comparable both as to their total membership and as to the extent of their pastoral leadership; otherwise differences between them that are attributed to the presence or absence of an efficient system of finance may in reality be owing to differences in the number of members or in leadership.

Actually to determine the effect of system, a search was made through our village and open country samples for the two largest groups of churches strictly comparable as to location, membership and leadership, but which nevertheless differed in respect to the systems of finance employed. On this basis, seventy-two open country churches with non-resident ministers were found whose membership in every case fell between fifty and 100, but which differed in their financial systems; forty-two having efficient systems, while thirty

had not. A comparison of these strictly comparable groups shows that the former annually contributed $11.59 a member, while the latter averaged $10.25.[1] In other words, the difference between these two averages is roughly one-eighth; and this indicates that "system," although important, is somewhat less of a factor in church finance than has generally been assumed. Of course, this conclusion is tentative. There are too few cases for us to base any final conclusions upon them. The principle involved, however, is extremely important. It is almost impossible to pick up any statistical analysis of church data without being struck by the fact that effects are attributed to one particular "cause" which on further analysis are seen to be the resultants of a number of different causes. For example, the facts have shown that the number of members a church has, as well as its leadership and the system of finance employed, are factors influencing the average individual contributions of members. These factors are not separate and distinct "causes," however, but are themselves closely interrelated. The number of members helps to determine the extent of a church's pastoral leadership; and this in turn influences the financial systems employed. In an effort to isolate the effect of any one of these elements in church finance, therefore, it is essential that the churches of the two groups compared be alike in all essential respects except as to the presence or absence of the particular factors under consideration, otherwise effects that are really the product of two or more different causes will be attributed to one cause. But the three factors of size, leadership and the system of finance undoubtedly go far to explain differences both in the total and in the per capita contributions of similarly situated churches.

[1] In detail, the differences between the two groups are as follows:

	Churches with Efficient Financial Systems	*Churches with Inefficient Financial Systems*
Average membership of churches	73	72
Salary	$ 6.07	$ 5.52
Upkeep	2.46	1.88
Benevolences	3.06	2.85
Total contribution	$11.59	$10.25

Chapter VIII

ATTENDANCE AND PROGRAM

The last chapter showed that from a strictly financial point of view, a church of large membership is a less expensive operating unit for the individual member than is a church with few members; which means that the average member of a small church gives more money than the average member of a large church. Moreover, these increased donations show greater self-denial; because all the churches are located in communities in which economic conditions are much the same, so that there is no reason to believe that the increased contributions of the members in small churches are owing to their situation in wealthier communities, and therefore to the ability of their members to give increased contributions with less sacrifice than the people in larger churches. Thus we are forced to the conclusion that the smaller the membership of a church, the larger the financial sacrifices of its members.

This immediately raises the question whether the members of the small church do not take more interest in their institution than the members of the larger church. Certainly they contribute a larger proportion of their means. Does it follow that the little church gains an allegiance and devotion from its members that the large church does not command?

Unfortunately we cannot measure directly such intangibles as the devotion that people accord to any institution. It is impossible to tell, except in an impressionistic way, whether the members in one type of church take more interest in its services than the members of another type take in it. Moreover, if some one were to argue that it is the large church that secures the greatest interest, all that one would have to do to refute the statement would be to deny it. Since both

assertions are merely matters of opinion, there is, scientifically speaking, no use of carrying the discussion further. Neither side can prove its point.

However, it is possible to handle the question indirectly. One can judge people objectively by their actions. If a group of men and women claim to be interested in the church but seldom attend its services, we may well question whether their devotion is as vital as that of a similar group of people who attend more regularly. This assumption is particularly valid in rural areas where there are relatively few other agencies to compete with the church.

EFFECT OF MEMBERSHIP ON ATTENDANCE

Our problem, then, is to find out whether the size of a church influences the extent to which the members participate in its services. Do the members of small churches attend services more regularly than the people who belong to churches with large membership? Here again our index of attendance interest should help us. In the case of 320 out of our sample of 349 open country churches, we know the average attendance at their various services as well as the number of such services a month. We are therefore in a position to work out the average attendance interest of members in the churches of varying size. In other words, we can ascertain the average amount of time contributed to church by members in exactly the same way in which one would work out the average money contributions of members, except that in this case we divide the time contribution total, not the money contribution total, by the membership total. The actual data are presented in Table XXVII.

Before commenting upon the figures, a word should be said about their meaning, especially as attendance units of this sort have not previously been employed in the analysis of church statistics. The first line deals solely with churches having a resident membership of less than fifty persons. This group, which includes 105 of our churches with an average membership of thirty-two, has an average individual attendance interest devoted monthly to worship equal to

3.4. What does this mean? Simply that the monthly aggregate attendance at services of worship represents nearly three and one-half services a member. In other words, this is the way the total amount of time a month devoted to the devotional services bulks in relation to the membership. In like manner, the last column gives the relation between the membership and the total monthly attendance interest, and shows that the average amount of time a month contributed

TABLE XXVII—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF 320 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Number of Members	*No. of Churches*	*Average Resident Membership*	*Average Individual Attendance Interest Monthly*	
			Worship Only	*All Activities*
1–49	105	32	3.4	7.7
1–24	*26*	*18*	*4.1*	*9.4*
25–49	*79*	*37*	*3.3*	*7.4*
50– 99	125	72	2.7	5.9
100–149	73	119	3.0	5.7
150 and over	17	179	3.2	5.6
Total	320	76	2.9	6.1

to these churches is equivalent to more than seven and one-half services a member.

Turning now to the table itself, it is evident that the average individual attendance interest covering "all activities" is greater in small churches than in large ones. In the group of churches that have a resident membership of less than twenty-five, the total time a month contributed to the services of these churches represents an attendance of nearly nine and one-half times the membership; but this ratio steadily decreases with increasing membership until in the group of churches with the largest membership it represents only about five and one-half services. This would seem to indicate that just as the church with few members commanded

more money a member, it also secured a greater allegiance in time contributions. The column showing the average individual contribution of members devoted to worship also bears out this contention; because the smallest church makes a record about 40 per cent. above that of the general run of churches, having an average attendance interest devoted monthly to worship of 4.1, compared with an average for the entire sample of 2.9. Considering their opportunities, however, the churches of smaller membership make an even better record than our figures would indicate; for the mem-

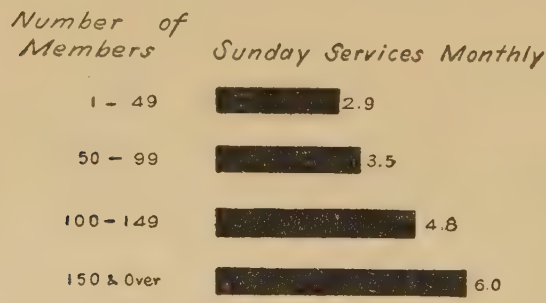


CHART XIII—AVERAGE NUMBER OF SUNDAY SERVICES CONDUCTED MONTHLY IN OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES OF VARYING MEMBERSHIP

bers in the large churches have opportunities to attend services of worship that the members of small churches do not enjoy. This difference in opportunity is shown in Chart XIII, which presents the average number of Sunday services a month for the churches of varying size.

This chart shows that the small churches averaged slightly fewer than three Sunday services a month; rising to three and one-half in the churches with fifty to ninety-nine members; then jumping to 4.8 in the 100-149 classification, and finally reaching an average of six services in the largest size-group. In other words, the number of Sunday services a month steadily increases as the church membership grows larger. This tendency makes the average per capita attendance at worship in very small churches all the more sur-

prising, for it shows that the high attendance record of these churches is made in spite of the fact that they have only half as many services to attend as have the churches with 150 members and over.

The effect of a church's number of members upon the regularity with which the members attend its services of worship can be more clearly seen if we limit the comparison to churches all of which afford the same opportunities for members to attend. An analysis of the 320 churches used in the last two tables shows that 170 of them have

TABLE XXVIII—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO SUNDAY WORSHIP IN 170 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES EACH OF WHICH HOLDS ONE SUNDAY SERVICE OF WORSHIP EACH WEEK

Number of Members	*No. of Churches*	*Average Individual Attendance Interest Monthly*
1–49	41	4.4
1–24	*7*	*6.0*
25–49	*34*	*4.3*
50– 99	69	2.7
100–149	50	2.3
150 and over	10	2.1
Total	170	2.6

each only one Sunday service a week devoted to worship. All these churches, therefore, offer their members the same facilities to attend Sunday services of worship. Let us group these churches according to the total number of members of each, in order that we may measure the interaction of membership and of attendance. To make the comparison still more precise, let us limit it to attendance at Sunday services only, since in these 170 churches the opportunities to go to midweek devotions vary from one church to another. On this basis, the fluctuations in attendance in churches of varying membership are as shown in Table XXVIII.

These figures show that when the comparison is limited

to churches that afford the same opportunities for attendance at services of worship, the churches with fewer than fifty members each make twice as good a showing as the largest churches, while the churches with fewer than twenty-five members have an attendance record that is nearly three times as high. The actual coefficient of correlation between membership and attendance interest in these 170 churches is —.41 ±.04. The conclusion is obvious; considering their opportunities, the members of the small church attend its services with much greater regularity than the members of

TABLE XXIX—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO WORSHIP IN 331 SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Number of Members	*No. of Churches*	*Average No. of Resident Members*	*Average No. of Sunday Services*	*Average Individual Attendance Interest Monthly*	
				Worship Only	*All Activities*
1- 49	41	30	3.5	4.2	8.9
50- 99	100	75	4.4	3.3	6.8
100–149	84	121	5.5	3.1	6.1
150–199	59	169	6.2	3.4	6.2
200 and over...	47	267	6.7	2.8	5.1
Total	331	125	5.2	3.2	6.0

large churches attend services in theirs. This is true in our sample of open country churches, at least.

Before attempting to explain the significance of these facts, let us check this tendency in our sample of small-village churches in order that we may be sure the attendance trend just discovered is not traceable to exceptional circumstances. The average individual attendance interest for the 331 churches in this sample, classified according to number of members, is presented in Table XXIX.

This table also shows that as the churches increase in membership the average individual participation of members decreases. Indeed, the trends are even more pronounced than in the group of open country churches. Even

average individual worship shows a decided downward trend in spite of the fact that the largest churches offer twice the opportunities to attend services that are offered by the smallest churches.

Unfortunately it is not possible to pick out, and further to analyze, a sub-group of these churches that afford the same opportunities to attend Sunday services of worship; but, as it happened, the number of Sunday services in these small village churches varied so widely from one to another that no considerable group with the same number of Sunday services could be found. Nevertheless the conclusion is clear. In small churches the members attend services more faithfully than members in large churches or, in other words, the larger the church membership the less regularly do the members attend.

How is this tendency to be explained? Why should small churches gain an allegiance that large churches do not command? The answer seems clearly to lie in a fundamental psychological fact. The smaller the membership of the church, the more immediate becomes the responsibility of its individual members. If a small church is to keep alive, each member must do "his bit." The very smallness of the group makes each person keenly aware of his or her obligation. A member who does not regularly attend services knows that he will be missed by the pastor and by the rest of the members. Moreover, since the membership is so small, each person capable of assuming leadership can be given something to do that is vital to the life of the church. This in turn helps to increase his faithfulness. Again, the members of small churches will probably make great efforts to get non-members to attend. These incentives are not present in the same degree in large churches. Just as in a big church the need of making large financial sacrifices becomes less and less imperative as the organization increases in membership, so also the need of attending regularly becomes less and less immediate. A large church can flourish even though the members attend less faithfully. To a certain extent a large church compensates for this tendency by increasing the number of services, or in other words, by

increasing the possibilities of participation; but even in these circumstances, as our data have shown, the average per capita attendance interest of a large church does not equal that of a very small church.

Here then is an argument that can be used to show that small churches are more effective than large ones. Certainly, as judged by the time and the money contributions of their members, they gain an allegiance that large churches do not command. But some one may reply: "Is the personal devotion of its members the main object of the Christian church? Is not its principal mission one of service to the community; and, if so, is not the large church in a better position to serve than a small one?"

EFFECT OF MEMBERSHIP ON PROGRAM

In trying to answer this, let us attempt to analyze objectively the programs of our two church samples in order that we may see whether size of membership affects the activities of the church. Does a large church put on a broader program than is put on by a small church? Fortunately our yardstick of attendance gives us a quantitative unit for measuring church programs in such terms that the results in different churches can be compared. By the use of monthly attendance interest, it is quite easy to contrast the amount of time a month devoted to the various activities of one church with similar time contributions in another. Since our immediate aim is to study the interrelationship of membership and program, let us begin by grouping according to size the 320 of our 349 open country churches that report full attendance data. Then let us work out, for churches of varying membership, the average amount of time devoted to worship, to Sunday school and to socio-religious activities. Results are given in Table XXX.

Before commenting on the figures, a word should be said about the classification employed. At first it may seem unsatisfactory to classify all of a church's activities, other than those of worship and Sunday school, under the blanket head of "socio-religious activities." This position would be

entirely correct were it not for the fact that the aggregate of such activities is very small. In no size-group does the time devoted to socio-religious organizations, such as ladies' auxiliaries, women's missionary societies, Boy Scouts and the like, equal as much as 10 per cent. of the total monthly attendance interest of the churches. As a first approach to the problem it was therefore decided not to subdivide this classification further.

TABLE XXX—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST DEVOTED TO WORSHIP, TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND TO SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN 320 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Number of Members	*No. of Churches*	*Resident Membership*	*Worship*			*Sunday School*	*Socio-Religious*	*Total*
			Sunday	*Mid-week*	*Total*			
1–49	105	32	98	12	110	124	13	247
1–24 ...	*26*	*18*	*70*	*3*	*73*	*83*	*11*	*167*
25–49	*79*	*37*	*107*	*15*	*122*	*138*	*14*	*274*
50– 99	125	72	180	11	191	198	37	426
100–149	73	119	332	26	358	268	59	685
150 and over..	17	179	531	34	565	383	51	999
Total	320	76	207	16	223	200	35	458

The figures of the table show that on the average, the amount of time devoted to Sunday worship is approximately equal to the time devoted to Sunday school, and that it averages in the neighborhood of 200 units of attendance interest a month. The contributions of time devoted to mid-week devotional services are equivalent to a turn out of only sixteen persons a month; while the time devoted to socio-religious activities is thirty-five attendance hours monthly. These figures, therefore, make it clear that worship and Sunday school are decidedly the principal activities of these rural churches. On the average no fewer than 423 out of a total of 458 units of monthly attendance interest are devoted to these two types of activities.

In a general way this distribution of time holds for each of our size-groups. On closer analysis, however, it becomes apparent that there are significant differences from one-size-group to another; that is to say, the program of these churches varies with their size of membership. For example, the churches with fewer than 100 members get a disproportionately large attendance interest devoted to Sunday school, compared with churches with larger memberships. This can be seen by comparing the attendance interest devoted to worship with that devoted to Sunday school.

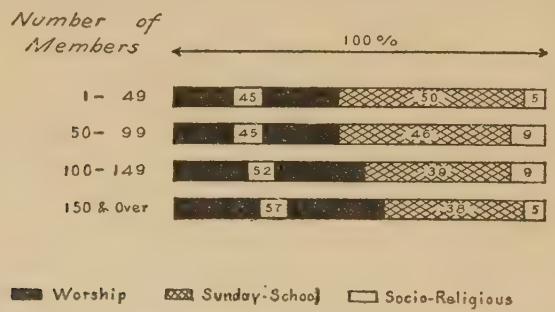


CHART XIV—PROPORTION OF ATTENDANCE INTEREST DEVOTED TO WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES OF VARYING MEMBERSHIP

In the smaller churches the time contributions to Sunday school exceed those devoted to worship; but in the larger churches the situation is reversed. These differences can be more clearly seen by throwing actual figures presented in the last table into percentages, using as 100 the average monthly attendance for each size-group.

Chart XIV shows that the distribution of a church's program varies with its size of membership. In the churches with fewer than fifty members, half the monthly time contributions are devoted to the Sunday school; while attendance at worship comprises only 45 per cent. of the total. In the largest churches, on the other hand, the situation is just reversed. The Sunday school drops to 38 per cent. of the total, while the time devoted to church rises to 57 per cent. In other

words, as the church increases in membership the relative importance of Sunday school activities decreases, while activities of worship increase in importance. The same tendency can be seen in our sample of 331 small village churches, as is shown in Table XXXI.

TABLE XXXI—MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST DEVOTED TO WORSHIP, TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND TO SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN 331 SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES

NUMBER

	Worship					
Number of Members	*Sunday*	*Mid-week*	*Total*	*Sunday School*	*Socio-Religious*	*Total*
1–49	108	20	128	119	21	268
1–24 ...	*78*	*18*	*96*	*100*	*12*	*208*
25–49 ...	*122*	*20*	*142*	*128*	*25*	*295*
50– 99	226	26	252	231	31	514
100–149	350	25	375	308	56	739
150–199	530	40	570	387	86	1,043
200 and over..	697	48	745	524	101	1,370
Total	364	31	395	306	56	757

PER CENT.

1–49	40%	7%	47%	45%	8%	100%
1–24 ...	*37*	*9*	*46*	*48*	*6*	*100*
25–49 ...	*41*	*7*	*48*	*44*	*8*	*100*
50– 99	44	5	49	45	6	100
100–149	47	3	50	42	8	100
150–199	51	4	55	37	8	100
200 and over..	51	4	55	38	7	100
Total	48	4	52	41	7	100

Here again it is evident that as the church increases in membership the proportionate importance of its Sunday school activities steadily declines. Clearly the size of a church influences the distribution of its program. How is this fact to be explained? The answer leads directly to the fundamental weakness of the small church. With all the

self-sacrifice and devotion of its members, the small church cannot put on as broad a program as can a large church. The reason is obvious; the members cannot raise the money to pay for it or find the people to man it. The last chapter showed, despite its high per capita gifts, that the average open country church with fewer than fifty members does not raise $500 a year, while the church with 150 members or more raises more than $2,100 a church. As a result, the expenditures of the little church are decidedly limited. This is why a small church must usually depend upon a non-resident minister for its paid leadership. As a consequence its services of worship suffer. Because it must rely upon a part-time pastor, the small church cannot offer as adequate a program of worship as can a large church. The differences between small and large churches in this respect have already been indicated. It will be recalled that in both our samples the small churches afford an average of only three Sunday services a month, while large churches have more than six. Here, then, is the explanation of the relatively large proportion of time devoted to worship in big churches. As a church increases in membership it can more and more easily pay for the services of a minister, and this in turn enables it to hold Sunday services of worship with greater and greater frequency. The Sunday school, on the other hand, declines in relative importance as the church membership increases, because there is no tendency for these activities to develop with the same rapidity. The reason is simple. The program of religious education can be carried on by voluntary leadership so that even a small church with its limited budget can hold a Sunday service each week. Since there is traditionally no tendency for a large church to hold more than this number of services, it happens that virtually all of our churches—small and large alike—hold one Sunday school service each week. When the services of worship are comparatively few, as is the case in small churches, this means that Sunday school activities bulk large in the total program of the church; but as the church increases in membership they decrease in relative importance because of the expansion in devotional services resulting

from the more adequate ministerial leadership that can be supported by the relatively large resources of big churches. In short, the larger the church membership the less is the church's program hampered by lack of funds.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS

From the standpoint of service to the community, the more adequate resources of large churches are important because with them these churches are able to put on broader religious programs than the resources of the small churches permit. Indeed, to many churchmen this is a fact of supreme importance. The advocates of the "social gospel" feel that one of the church's most important functions is the organizing of its members for "community service." Concretely, this usually involves organizing various age-groups and sex-groups for some form of service. These are the activities that we have classified under the head of "socio-religious." In cities, these aspects of church work have assumed relatively large proportions; but in the open country they are far less extensive. These socio-religious activities in both our samples aggregate about 7 per cent. of the total monthly attendance interest of a church.

From the point of view of the community, however, the largest churches are the ones that put on the broadest programs of this kind. Our previous tables have shown that the socio-religious activities of churches with fewer than twenty-five members are so small that the average monthly attendance interest devoted to them does not represent an attendance of more than a dozen persons a month; while in the larger open country churches this total reached between sixty and eighty, and in the villages, more than 100. Thus it is evident that the large churches meet, better than do the small ones, the organizational needs of the community in which they are placed. This is but natural since they have both a more adequate paid leadership to conduct such activities and a larger membership from which to draw both recruits and contributions.

Not only does the large church conduct its socio-religious

activities on a larger scale than does a small church, but also it puts on programs better adapted to the needs of the various age-groups and sex-groups within the community. To demonstrate these qualitative differences, as contrasted with the merely quantitative, the churches in our open country sample were classified under three heads: (1) those having no socio-religious programs; (2) those having socio-religious programs for women only; (3) those that provide even broader programs, which we have grouped under the heading programs for "mixed groups." Table XXXII presents this data.

TABLE XXXII—DIVERSIFICATION OF THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PROGRAM IN 320 OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES OF VARYING MEMBERSHIP

		Type of Socio-Religious Program					
Number of Members	*No. of Churches*	*None* No.	*Women Only* No.	*Mixed Groups* No.	*None* %	*Women Only* %	*Mixed Groups* %
1–49	105	56	40	9	53	38	9
50–99	125	34	57	34	27	46	27
100 and over....	90	16	45	29	18	50	32
Total	320	106	142	72	33	44	23

This table shows that one-third of the churches have socio-religious programs that are entirely negligible, while 44 per cent. limit such activities to organizations for women only, leaving 23 per cent., or less than one-fourth of the churches, with socio-religious organizations that appeal both to young people and women. But the large churches are the ones that put on the more diversified socio-religious programs. More than half the churches that have fewer than fifty members have no socio-religious organizations of any sort; while less than 10 per cent. have programs that appeal both to young people and women. In the larger churches, on the other hand, only 18 per cent. have no socio-religious organizations, while nearly one-third fall in our broadest program classification. The implication is unavoidable. Large churches put on broader and more adequate social programs

than do small churches. This conclusion is confirmed by similar figures for our sample of 331 village churches, which are presented in Chart XV.

Here 60 per cent. of the largest churches have socio-religious activities for mixed groups, while only 12 per cent. of the churches with fewer than fifty members have such activities. In short, it is apparent that large churches are in a better position than are small ones to organize different age-groups and sex-groups for various forms of activity.

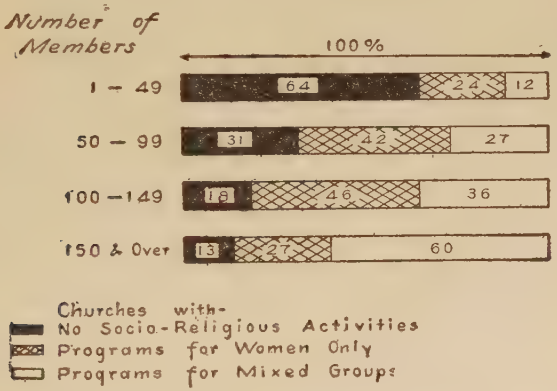


CHART XV—DIVERSITY OF THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS IN SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES OF VARYING MEMBERSHIP

Thus our analysis brings us to the heart of the conflict regarding the relative merits of small and of large churches. This whole question, which has led to endless discussion, seems to depend entirely upon the question—What do you want a church to do? If this ideal is conceived as social service, then a large church is more effective than a small one, because it has the resources in men, money and leadership to carry on its activities, especially the socio-religious, on a comparatively large scale. The danger, however, arises from the fact that the members of large churches do not feel their individual church responsibility keenly. Certainly small churches gain an allegiance and devotion from their

constituency that the larger churches do not command. The whole argument, therefore, over small vs. large churches, is a question of function that cannot be settled until the aim of the local church has been defined. It is not the purpose of this study to define this aim but merely to point out the uselessness of the present argument so long as aims and aspirations have not been clearly stated.

EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP

Thus far our analysis has shown that the number of members a church has is a factor that decidedly influences other aspects of its life. It affects both the time and the money contributions of the members, the paid leadership which the church can afford, as well as the scope of the church's program. In short, large or small membership is an important determinant of church life. This does not mean that the number of members is *the cause* of all the differences among churches; but it does mean that when we confine our comparisons to churches that are operating in highly comparable social and economic settings, membership is an important factor in accounting for such differences.

Membership, though important, is not the only factor that makes for differences between comparably situated churches. Leadership, which itself is closely interrelated with size, is also a factor. For example, the previous chapter showed that the larger the membership, the higher the proportion of resident ministers. This does not mean, however, that membership is entirely the cause, and leadership entirely the effect. Rather the relationship is one of mutual dependence. If a church secures the services of a high-class, resident minister, he will probably see to it that the membership grows. In other words, membership affects leadership, which in turn reacts upon membership.

If it is true that leadership, like membership, is a cause as well as an effect, it too can be considered as a determinant of church life. It has already been pointed out, in the last chapter, that leadership affects the money contributions of a church. We will now try to find out whether it also af-

fects attendance and program. In order that we shall not attribute to leadership effects that are in reality attributable to membership, we will again confine our comparisons to churches that are strictly comparable with respect to number of members. Moreover, as before, we will further limit the comparison to churches with pastors who devote their full time to the ministry. On this basis, let us take up the question of attendance. How does the presence or absence

TABLE XXXIII—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVOTED TO (A) WORSHIP AND (B) TOTAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH

	A				B			
	Open Country Churches with Minister		*Village Churches with Minister*		*Open Country Churches with Minister*		*Village Churches with Minister*	
Number of Members	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*
1– 49	4.6	3.1	6.7	3.3	10.0	7.3	12.7	7.9
50– 99	3.2	2.4	3.6	2.9	6.9	5.5	7.5	5.9
100–149	3.3	2.6	3.4	2.1	6.3	5.2	6.6	4.8
150–199	3.7	1.9	3.5	2.5	6.4	3.1	6.4	4.5
200 and over...	..	..	2.8	..	..	..	5.2	..

(Comparison is limited to churches whose pastors devote their full time to the Ministry.)

of a resident minister influence the extent to which the members participate in a church's services? The answer is given in Table XXXIII.

These figures show that in every case the smaller churches secure appreciably more participation a member than the large ones; but, more than that, they show that in every size-group the churches with resident pastors secure much higher time contributions a member than those with non-resident ministers. Of course, part of the difference between the resident and non-resident groups of churches can again be explained in part by the fact that the churches

with resident pastors are ones that probably have, religiously speaking, the more interested and enthusiastic church members. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the minister himself is undoubtedly a factor that accounts for some of the differences between churches in per capita attendance interest. In other words, both leadership and membership help to determine the extent to which the members participate in the services of their church.

Turning now to the church program, we find that it too

TABLE XXXIV—AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE INTEREST OF OPEN COUNTRY CHURCHES HAVING RESIDENT PASTORS, COMPARED WITH SIMILAR FIGURES FOR CHURCHES WITH NON-RESIDENT MINISTERS

	No. of Churches		*Attendance Interest per Church*					
			Worship		*Sunday School*		*Socio-Religious*	
Number of Members	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*	*Resident*	*Non-Resident*
1– 49	11	70	151	101	157	120	19	12
50– 99	33	76	242	176	225	192	54	32
100–149	31	25	403	301	286	256	75	56
150 and over	12	3	659	328	432	200	64	13

(Comparison limited to churches whose pastors devote their full time to the ministry.)

is affected by the presence or absence of a resident minister, together with the number of members a church has. This is shown in Table XXXIV.

From these data it is evident that even when the comparisons are limited to strictly comparable membership-groups, the church with a resident minister has a larger program as judged by monthly attendance interest than has the church with a non-resident man. This applies to all three types of church services; but is particularly significant of the socio-religious type, because of the importance accorded to these activities by certain churchmen who emphasize the importance of "social service" as a major function of church life. Certainly our figures show that a church

with a resident minister devotes more time a month to socio-religious activities than do the churches with non-resident pastors. This indicates that the advocates of the "social gospel" are correct in their emphasis upon the need for every church to have a resident minister. As a rule, only the

CHART XVI — AVERAGE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES MONTHLY OF SMALL-VILLAGE CHURCHES WITH RESIDENT MINISTERS COMPARED WITH SIMILAR FIGURES FOR CHURCHES HAVING NON-RESIDENT MINISTERS

churches with resident pastors have the necessary paid leadership to put on broad socio-religious programs.

An analysis of our small-village sample reveals in general the same differences in program between resident and non-resident churches that are shown by our open country group. The average time contributions a month devoted to socio-religious activities by these small-village churches are presented in Chart XVI.

The conclusion then is that membership and leadership, which are themselves closely connected factors, go far to

explain the differences among comparably located churches. Of course these are not the only internal factors that affect church life. The denominational policy of the church is probably another element in the situation. Had it been possible, it would have been interesting to study the effect of this factor to ascertain to what extent the national policies of the denominations make for differences among churches. For example, how does the policy of the Seventh Day Adventists, with its emphasis upon tithing, affect the contributions of their churches as compared with the contributions of similarly situated churches of denominations that do not tithe. This and many other problems of the same sort should afford a most interesting field of study, and would certainly have been undertaken as a part of this investigation if the necessary time and funds had been available. In the circumstances, however, detailed inquiry was out of the question. But it was possible to carry the analysis far enough to assure ourselves that the averages for all churches corresponded very closely indeed with those of the Methodist Episcopal denomination which in each of our samples form the largest group of churches of any one denomination.

PART III: COMPARING CHURCH LIFE PAST AND PRESENT: WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

Chapter IX

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN A GENERATION

Thus far this comparative study has dealt solely with the contemporary church. It now remains to contrast church life of to-day with that of yesterday.

For this purpose the Interchurch material cannot be utilized since it deals largely with 1920 conditions. Of course, if comparable surveys had been undertaken in the past, it would have been possible to compare the Interchurch material with that of these previous studies, and in this way to arrive at some precise conclusions regarding recent tendencies in church life over a period of time. Unfortunately, earlier surveys of this sort are not available. Indeed, church records are so inadequate, and survey methods as applied to the church so recent, that there are few data for past periods sufficiently reliable for comparison with current statistics.

The investigations of Rev. Charles O. Gill and Honorable Gifford Pinchot are a notable exception. Their surveys, which appeared more than a decade ago under the title of *The Country Church,* attempted to show the changes that occurred in church life of Windsor County, Vermont, and of Tompkins County, New York, over a twenty-year period.

As this was precisely the sort of inquiry upon which it was desired that our study should throw additional light, it was decided to bring their earlier survey up to date. For this purpose, Miss Elizabeth Hooker, an experienced investigator of this Institute, spent the summer of 1922 in Windsor County, Vermont, gathering current information that could be compared with the earlier material. Windsor County was selected rather than Tompkins because the church records in Windsor County made possible a more accurate and satis-

factory survey. Moreover, Mr. Gill, who conducted the field work of the previous study, had been a resident of Windsor County prior to the survey and therefore knew the area thoroughly even before starting his investigation, while he was less familiar with Tompkins County.

The purpose, therefore, of this part of our report, is to present a comparison of church data in Windsor County, secured by Miss Hooker, with comparable material collected more than a decade ago by Mr. Gill.

From one standpoint it is unfortunate that Windsor County lies within the Northern Colonial area;[1] for, rightly or wrongly, church executives are convinced that the rural church has suffered, during the past generation, a more severe loss of influence in this area than in any other major region of America. Had it been possible, therefore, it would have been desirable to select a county in another region. This was out of the question, because surveys similar to the Gill and Pinchot studies were not available in other regions.

Nevertheless, this comparative study of Windsor County is significant from two points of view. In the first place, it affords an unusual opportunity for contrasting church life of to-day and that of yesterday, not only by means of money contributions and membership ratios, but also by the test of attendance; for the Gill and Pinchot survey emphasized attendance, as well as money and membership data, as a yardstick for measuring the church. Since one of the main purposes of this book was to develop our attendance index and to test it in comparing churches, it was particularly valuable for our purpose to use the Gill and Pinchot material. It will be interesting to see whether the thirty years of church life in Windsor County give the same results when tested by attendance as when tested by financial contributions and membership ratios. In the second place, the comparative study of Windsor County is significant because the county, while admittedly not typical of the country as a whole, is

[1] It will be recalled that the Northern Colonial region, as used throughout this book, includes not only the New England states, but New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as certain parts of West Virginia and Maryland that are similar to adjacent areas in Pennsylvania.

representative of many Northern Colonial rural areas that have become rapidly industrialized during the last generation.

A description of Windsor County is required here to indicate the kind of rural areas of which it is typical.[2] To appreciate the changes that have taken place in Windsor County since the earlier period for which Gill and Pinchot made their comparative investigation, we must know certain characteristics of the natural setting. The surface of the county is one of rugged hills, in forest or pasture, separated by narrow, descending valleys. The scenery is beautiful. The climate, though severe, with a long, cold winter of snowy isolation and a short season of growth, is healthful and invigorating. There is natural wealth of timber and of stone. The streams that continued the work of glaciers in carving the valleys are interrupted at various points by falls affording abundant water power. Near these falls upon the narrow intervals lie the villages, whose industries can obtain their power from the streams. The hills divide the area into small communities, which for many generations were thus kept separate and aloof.

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

From the time of the original settlement, which antedated by a few years the Revolutionary War, the people have drawn their livelihood principally from a Spartan agriculture, and secondarily from manufacturing enterprises; but in recent years manufacturing has outstripped farming as a source of wealth. Since the comparatively level spaces along the streams were small and interrupted, much other land was cleared that was ill adapted to cultivation. In the early days, the farmer had a struggle to wrest from a niggardly Nature the means of subsistence. People lived, as the saying goes in Vermont, "on pork and potato parings." Therefore, it is neither surprising nor even regrettable that the first to be noticed among the changes wrought

[2] The Federal Census and the data secured by Miss Hooker in her field work were the chief sources of information used in this description.

in the last generation in Windsor County was alteration in the type of agriculture. In 1920 the number of acres of improved land was less than half the total in 1890, and the number of farms had decreased by about one-eighth. Moreover, the total value of farm property, athough increasing in currency values since 1890, materially depreciated in purchasing power.

This apparent decline, however, was not a retreat but a strategic withdrawal of forces. Lands that were ill adapted to agriculture have either been allowed to return to their forest state or have been devoted to pasturage. Farmers have learned better, too, what they can advantageously attempt to raise. Where formerly there were eight sheep, the competition of the West has reduced the number to one. Instead of raising as many beef cattle as milch cows, as was the case thirty years ago, farmers now focus their attention on dairy animals. Potatoes have also become an important money crop.

The lessons of experience are resulting in increased prosperity for the farmer. In 1890, one farm in eight was run by a tenant, while in 1920 the number was only one in twelve. Although the proportion of farms carrying mortgages is about the same as in 1890, these farms are not mortgaged at present to so large a part of their value. Though there are still farms with unpainted, dilapidated outbuildings, and machinery exposed to the weather, the number is decreasing; while the number of prosperous farms with pure-bred cattle and progressive management is increasing. It is now almost a matter of course that a farmer should own an automobile. Farm incomes, it is true, are still unequal and often inadequate; but the hard-working, intelligent and progressive farmer finds his business profitable.

The earliest agency that helped to bring about this improvement in agriculture was the Grange, which has many local branches in the county. Later, agricultural papers and State fairs were brought in to help. Finally, and most important of all, the County Farm Bureau was started in 1912, and has been steadily growing ever since. Under its influ-

ence the farmers are not only learning better methods of agriculture, but since 1920 they have engaged to an increasing extent in coöperative buying and marketing. For instance, coöperative creameries now market a large proportion of the dairy products.

In spite of the recent agricultural depression, the future of farming in the county is full of hope. The coöperative creameries are a sign of changing economic conditions. In a few townships it is probable that the tide has turned from the cities back to the soil. Indeed, some of the hill farms on back roads, which were abandoned not so much because of poor soil as on account of isolation, are in certain southern townships being taken up by Finnish farmers. Thus the past thirty years, judged by efficiency and prosperity, have seen distinct agricultural progress. The next generation, under the leadership of the Farm Bureau, is likely to see still more rapid advance.

There have been as great changes also in the manufacturing industries of the region. Almost from the beginning these enterprises made use of the available water power. Even in 1810 there were in the county ninety different mills. In those days, however, many things were made by hand. The woolen, cotton and linen goods produced in the county in 1810, had a total value of over $300,000; yet only one-seventh were produced in mills, the rest having been woven in hand looms on the farms. In recent decades there has been a marked change. Since 1890 the number of wage earners has nearly doubled and the value of the products has increased even more.

Manufacturing industries have advanced more rapidly in the county than in the State at large. In 1890, of the total number of operatives in the State, Windsor County furnished one-tenth; in 1919 it furnished one-seventh. In the county itself the proportion of factory operatives to the total population has risen in the course of the past generation from one in thirteen to one in eight. At present the value added by manufacture is over $13,000,000 as against a total income from the farms of about $5,000,000. That is, the factories contribute to the prosperity of the county

more than two and one-half times as much as the farms. For over a century, these upland valleys have been experiencing the Industrial Revolution as truly as have the cities; and during the past thirty-three years the effects have been noticeable to an increasing degree.

Another contrast is suggested by the increasing operations of savings banks. In 1887 only three banks in the county received savings deposits; in 1921 there were eight. At the earlier date, the number of depositors corresponded to one in five of the total population; in 1921 it corresponded to two out of every three. The average deposit was formerly $50 for every individual included in the county; in 1921 it was $329. The increase in savings deposits is not due entirely to the substitution of savings bank methods for the older one of hoarding. The advancement of manufacturing and, to a less extent, of agriculture, indicates a genuine increase in the combined income and the total accumulated wealth.

INCREASED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Another important change during the past generation has been the improvement in communication, especially between the open country areas. In 1890 the rural population was far more isolated than now. The very framework of the hilly land tended toward isolation. Think of high hills with steep and stony roads over the tops and the muddy roads through the valleys; think of insufficient railways and stages, of leisurely horses and buggies, and finally of the long winter months with their "tumultuous privacy of storm." This was Windsor County in the nineties.

It was not until 1892, after the earlier period studied by Mr. Gill, that the first step toward improved means of communication was taken, with the levying of the first state highway tax; and it was only a year or two before Mr. Gill's second period that the State Aid Law was enacted and the law requiring the registration and taxation of automobiles. The improvement of the roads, slow at first, has gone on steadily. Since the provisions for Federal Aid in

1916, the growth has been very rapid. Large sums are now being spent in road construction and maintenance; and considerable numbers of men are employed each season in supervision and labor. In 1922, 432 miles of valley road, amounting to over one-fifth of the entire road mileage of the county, were part of the state highways. These new roads, though narrow, furnish a freedom of communication which, even since 1910, has transformed the life of the farmers in the valley sections.

One contrast will accentuate the change wrought in thirty years. The Census of 1890 enumerated 3,692 working oxen, almost an average of one to a farm; in the Census of 1920 oxen are not mentioned. To-day, almost everybody has an automobile, and not all of them are Fords. Although the registration of cars in Vermont is not made on a county basis, the Secretary of State estimates the number owned in Windsor County as between 4,500 and 5,000. On "dance nights," even a small hamlet may sometimes have a hundred or more automobiles parked along its thoroughfares.

Other means of communication fast becoming general are the telephone and the rural free delivery. Moving picture shows, whatever their drawbacks, bring within reach of the shyest and most isolated farmer lad, the great events and the melodramas, the jokes, trivialities and bywords of the world beyond the hill. Even the radio has found its way into many of the communities. The mail order house, the domestic periodical, and the sympathetic and indefatigable home demonstration agent are lowering the barriers erected by unfashionable clothes and furnishings. The granges, and a growing number of community organizations, bring people together far more frequently than they were in the habit of meeting thirty years ago.

Increase in freedom of communication through so many agencies has naturally been accompanied by a rise in educational advantages. A number of the schools in Windsor County are now excellent. This is especially true of the graded schools in the villages and the consolidated schools in a few progressive townships. The numerous district schools, however, are still very primitive. According to an

official report in 1922 only six out of 1,100 in Vermont are even 75 per cent. efficient. Nevertheless the outlook is improving. Since the establishment of teacher training courses in the larger high schools, the instruction has greatly improved.

Besides the school, public libraries are doing their part to broadcast education. They are found in almost every village, and sometimes even in small hamlets, and are freely used. Moreover, not all the books in use are fiction. The multiplication, even in ten years, of community lectures and concerts, of Chautauqua courses, and moving picture shows —which in a few places are administered by disinterested agencies using films of a high grade—testifies to an increasing range of intellectual interests and tastes.

Freer communication and growing intellectual interests ought to mean increase in coöperative action; but in Windsor County the spirit of coöperation has had to contend with several obstacles of long standing. Both the topography of the area and the natural individualism of the farmer militate against the movement. Another effective obstacle has been the system of government by townships. The county hardly exists, except on the map and for the administration of justice. By townships the people vote, keep order, levy taxes, relieve distress, and manage public works which consist chiefly of roads and town halls. Schools are conducted, in many cases, not even by townships but by local districts. It is true that since the introduction of a state system of supervising schools, the townships have been combined into administrative units; but these divisions have been made with little regard to county lines. As for the highways, part of Windsor County is in one state district, part in another. As far, therefore, as politics and education are concerned, there is no unity of interest, of policy, of records, or of administration of the county as a whole.

Nevertheless, one unifying agency has been the Windsor County Y.M.C.A., which was started in 1906, shortly before Mr. Gill's second period. This organization promoted many enterprises for the public welfare. Some of these had a state-wide appeal, but many were for the benefit of Windsor

County alone. For instance, the Y.M.C.A. helped to establish the Windsor County Farm Bureau, which is already proving its cohesive power among the farmers, particularly in the northern and northwestern sections.

The Bi-State Interchurch Get Together also promotes mutual understanding, especially among the church workers, not only in the county but in adjacent territory as well, filling a place similar to the Hartford Forward Movement described in *The Country Church*. On a smaller scale are the community clubs found in many of the villages, and the associations for providing district nurses, which operate in two or three sections.

If one of the regular attendants at church in 1888 could return to view the Windsor County of to-day, what a transformation he would see! Instead of rocky, rutted cart tracks, deep in mud for months of the year, he would find graded and graveled highways, traversed by the farmer in his new automobile. On the best farms he would find specialization, especially in potato-raising and dairying, rewarded by better living, running water, and store clothes. The mills would prove to be larger, the villages more populous, the railroad station more crowded with outgoing freight. Better homes with their surroundings better kept, more banks and more bank books, would give him evidence of a higher degree of prosperity. The consolidation and graded schools and the new libraries and community buildings would bear witness to increased intellectual interests. And at night, with automobiles gathered for a moving picture show, a grange dance or a community sing, the stranger from the past would be convinced of a new tendency to join in common pleasures.

Such transformations of the environment could hardly help but modify church life. It will be interesting to see whether in the new freedom from the imprisonment of a grim poverty on the one hand and of narrow home valleys on the other, the churches have been able to attract and to guide the energies and resources thus released, and to hold their traditional leadership among the many novel agencies through which the people are slowly learning to act to-

gether. Under the new conditions would our returned traveler be as frequent in his attendance at church?

THE INHABITANTS

First, however, let us briefly consider the people themselves. Our study of environment must already have suggested some of their characteristics. We already know, for instance, that they are strong in body and spirit, and that they have that practical effectiveness which they call "faculty." They have learned in a hard school to be thrifty —perhaps overthrifty. Long accustomed to isolation, with its lesson of independence, initiative and fortitude, they are beginning to-day to exercise themselves in the new discipline of fellowship.

They are of good stock. The first settlers came soon after the French and Indian War; Hartford, for example, dating from 1771. They were descendants of those English and Scotch Puritans who in the previous century had sought in the savage regions of Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts "freedom to worship God." They have traditions of ancestors who heard from more than 140 miles away the guns of Bunker Hill, and also traditions of the Constitutional Convention at Windsor in 1777, which was interrupted by tidings of the Battle of Ticonderoga.

The great majority of the county's population are native Americans. While the 1920 Census shows that 13.2 per cent. of America's inhabitants are foreign-born, the proportion in Windsor County is only 8.6 per cent., and compares with 5.8 per cent. in 1890. This increase in the county's foreign-speaking population has been brought about largely by the coming of foreigners to the village factories.

The rate of illiteracy is also comparatively low, being only 2.7 per cent. The departure of large numbers of young people, however, has raised the average age of the population. While for the United States the proportion of persons of forty-five years and over is 19.1 per cent. in urban sections, and 18.7 per cent. in rural areas, in Windsor County the proportion in 1920 was 29.2 per cent.

For many years the county's population steadily increased, reaching its peak in 1830. From that Census period to 1890, the western migration and the drift from the farms cityward caused a loss in numbers, representing in all a decline of more than one-fifth. After 1890, because of the rapid development of factories, especially in the last decade, the tide turned; and in 1920 the net gain for thirty years had been just about one-sixth.

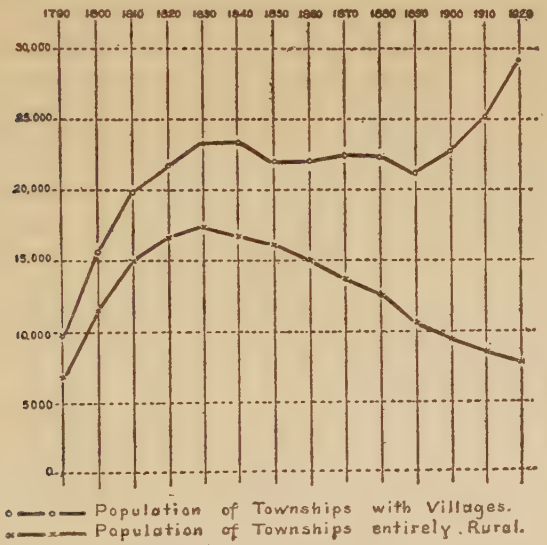


CHART XVII—TREND OF POPULATION IN WINDSOR COUNTY SINCE 1790

Although the total population of Windsor County has increased somewhat during the last thirty years, nevertheless it is important to remember that within the county itself the villages have grown while the open country areas have lost. This tendency is clearly shown in Chart XVII. Here fluctuations in the population have been plotted separately; (1) for townships containing villages and (2) for townships strictly open country. Notice the swift climb since 1890 of the line representing population of townships

containing villages. This is especially true during the last decade, which includes the years of war. On the other hand, mark the steady, almost relentless course downward of the line representing open country townships. Clearly the two show very different tendencies. There is some reason to hope that the impoverishment of the country districts in Windsor County is beginning to be arrested. In the decade between 1910 and 1920, Finns began to settle in three of the townships. Nevertheless, the open country population of the county is still on the decline.

Differences between the village and the open country populations are deep rooted, and the people therefore form two groups that are quite distinct. These groups are not yet aware of their common interests. Differently clad and separated by barriers of speech and manners, they go their separate ways. Fortunately, however, the many agencies now tending to facilitate communication, the high schools where village and country young people study together, and the growing interest in affairs wider than the restricted concerns of either class, are actually beginning to break down the wall of separation; but the members of the older generation still hold apart. How could it be otherwise?

During the last generation, therefore, the village churches have been confronted with widening opportunities, while the country churches have been faced by the problem of a diminishing public from which to draw workers and support. Our study will try to make clear how these two types of churches have met their widely different problems.

Chapter X

THIRTY YEARS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCE

Before the publication of *The Country Church,* the religious workers of Windsor County were complacent in the belief that all was well with their churches. Of course, some people believed that the church in their particular locality was rapidly losing its hold upon the inhabitants; but such loss of influence was generally attributed to local and temporary causes. As a resident pastor, Mr. Gill became fearful that such declines were not local but general throughout the area. In coöperation with Honorable Gifford Pinchot, he decided to gather objective evidence to ascertain the state of religious affairs.

Then, as now, the tests most commonly applied to church activities were membership and financial figures. In addition to these customary criteria, however, these investigators decided to include data for attendance, which they came to feel was a more convincing test than either of the other two. As a basis for the comparing of the church life of yesterday with that of to-day, it was decided to use contemporary data (1908) and corresponding figures for twenty years earlier (1888).

In making these comparisons, Mr. Gill was not able to include all the churches in the county. This was because of a lack of data for the earlier period. In collecting membership and expenditure figures, he was forced to rely upon denominational yearbooks and church minutes. Such statistics were not available for all the active churches in the county, of which there were eighty-four in 1888 and eighty-two in 1908. He was able, however, to secure complete

membership data at the two periods for fifty-five churches. In bringing this study up to date, this Institute collected similar information covering the year 1921. It is believed that these churches are typical of the county as a whole. Between 1908 and 1921, five churches in Windsor County were abandoned, while through federation four churches were combined into two, leaving a total of seventy-five. Even these figures do not quite tell the full story of the decline, for a few of the churches now hold services less frequently than in the past.

The fifty-five churches in our sample include three of the five abandoned and one of the two federated churches,[1] and are therefore reasonably typical of the churches in the county as a whole.

CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Having determined the sample upon which our figures rest, we are now in a position to compare the membership of these fifty-five churches at the three periods. In making this comparison we have included not only totals for the county as a whole, but sub-totals for open country and village churches separately. Although such figures were not presented by Mr. Gill, they are thought significant because of the different tendency in population trends between village and open country areas, especially during the period from 1908 to 1921. In drawing this distinction, any church was classified as a "village" church provided it was located within a center having, in 1920, a population of more than 251 inhabitants. Strictly speaking, some of the churches classified on this basis as "village" churches were located in towns. However, no effort was made to distinguish towns from villages in this study, because places that were towns in 1920 were villages in 1888. On this basis the total membership figures for the fifty-five churches at the three periods were as shown in Table XXXV.

[1] For comparative purposes the federated church included in our sample was considered as two churches because it consisted of two separate organizations in the first two periods.

This table shows that while church memberships in the thirty-three village churches increased in the last generation from 3,449 to 4,447, or 29 per cent., the membership in the twenty-two open country churches declined from 1,239 to 915, or 27 per cent. As a result of these opposing tendencies the county showed a net gain of 14 per cent.

At first sight, this may seem like a significant gain; but before coming to a final conclusion it is necessary to consider this increase in relation to changes in Protestant population. Does the membership figure in 1921 indicate that a larger proportion of the county's inhabitants were church members than in 1888? In other words, what we wish to

TABLE XXXV—TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN 55 WINDSOR COUNTY CHURCHES AT THREE PERIODS

		No. of Church Membership			*Index Number (1888 = 100)*		
Location	*Churches*	*1888*	*1908*	*1921*	*1888*	*1908*	*1921*
Village	33	3,449	3,777	4,447	100.0	109.5	128.9
Open Country.	22	1,239	1,112	915	100.0	89.7	73.1
Total	55	4,688	4,889	5,362	100.0	104.3	114.4

find is the proportion of Protestant church members to the Protestant population at each of the three periods. Fortunately Mr. Gill carefully worked out the Protestant population for each township for the first two periods. This he did by subtracting the estimated number of non-Protestants, which in Windsor County was made up almost entirely of Catholics, from the population of each township as given by the Federal Censuses of 1890 and 1910. To bring this comparison up to date, the total population of the county for 1920 was again available from the Census. Moreover, the Religious Census of 1916 furnished the necessary basis for estimating the number of Catholics in the county. By subtracting the Catholics from the total population, we arrived at the Protestant population in 1920.

Having determined the total Protestant population of the county at the three periods, it then remained to break down this total into sub-totals for village and open country areas

separately. For the first two periods this task was simple, because Mr. Gill had compiled the Protestant population of each township separately. To get our sub-totals, all that was necessary was to add together: (1) the population in townships in which villages were located, and (2) those that were strictly open country. In this way it was possible to contrast the tendencies in areas that were strictly open country with those in areas largely dominated by village life.

To secure similar figures for the last period, however, was not so easy. Fortunately, for our purpose, nearly all

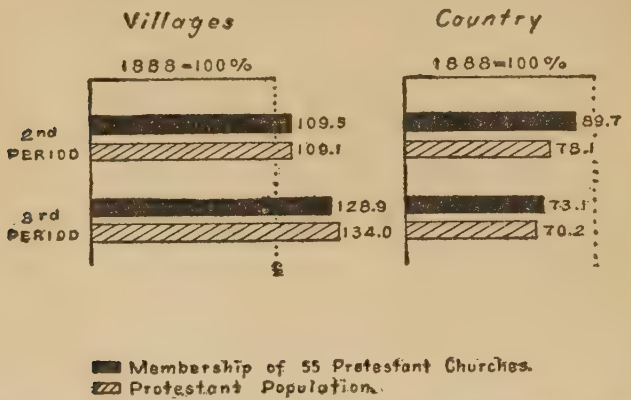


CHART XVIII—VARIATIONS IN THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF WINDSOR COUNTY COMPARED WITH POPULATION CHANGES AT THE THREE PERIODS

the open country inhabitants are Protestants. If, therefore, we assume that the same proportion of Catholics reside in the open country townships as were discovered by Mr. Gill in 1908, the number at present would be in the neighborhood of 300. Careful inquiry within the county confirmed the accuracy of this figure. When working out the membership ratios of the open country townships, these 300 Catholics were subtracted in order that we might obtain the estimated Protestant population. The remaining Catholics were therefore deducted from the total population of the townships containing villages, in order that we might ascertain the Protestant population of the village townships.

As the total number of Catholics in the entire county is less than 9 per cent., and as the proportion of Catholics outside the villages is known to be small, the error in these estimates is probably insignificant.

Chart XVIII presents the Protestant population at the three periods. For comparative purposes, membership data for the fifty-five churches have also been included.

This chart shows that changes in church membership have followed closely changes in the population. In the villages, for example, both population and membership figures increased 9 per cent. between 1888 and 1908; and in the last generation, membership rose 29 per cent., while the population was growing 34 per cent. In the open country, on the other hand, church membership and population have both declined. Between the first and last periods the population dropped 30 per cent., while membership fell 27 per cent. As a net result the population of the county during the last thirty-three years rose 11 per cent., while church membership increased 14 per cent.

As far as membership figures are concerned, we are therefore forced to conclude that during the last generation the church situation as indicated by membership ratios has remained virtually unchanged.

FINANCIAL COMPARISONS

Let us turn next to the other method generally employed for comparing church life; namely, by financial comparisons. In comparing Windsor's churches on this basis, it was not possible to use all of the fifty-five churches for which membership data were available. It so happened that four of these churches failed to report their total expenditures at all three periods, and two others had to be excluded because of exceptional building programs which unduly increased their "usual" expenses. Therefore our financial comparisons are based upon an analysis of forty-nine churches. This procedure is somewhat different from that employed by Mr. Gill. He secured information from other churches to take the place of the churches that had to be thrown out.

In this way he was able to compare membership and financial data for fifty-five churches. But as the two groups were not composed of the same fifty-five churches, it was decided to confine our comparisons to the forty-nine churches of the original fifty-five for which there were data at all three periods, since this procedure made it somewhat clearer that the two groups of churches were not identical.

In making these comparisons, five-year averages were used to provide against accidental variations from year to year. Thus, in *The Country Church* the average expenditures for the period 1905-9 are compared with similar averages for 1885-9. Following the same procedure, the Institute compiled five-year averages, 1917-21, to compare with Mr. Gill's data.

Since currency had depreciated between the period 1888 to 1908, it was decided that Mr. Gill, in connection with his survey, should undertake the difficult task of studying in detail the cost of living in the county's different townships, thus making it possible to compare the church expenditures for these two periods not only in terms of dollars but in purchasing power as well. Because of lack of data regarding Mr. Gill's method of determining changes in the cost of living, the work of making similar studies for the last period had to be abandoned. Instead, changes in the living costs were estimated on the basis of Dun's index of wholesale prices, which is simply one of several similar compilations that try to show changes in the price levels by averaging together, at regular intervals, the wholesale prices of a number of different commodities in general use. For example, this index shows that during the period 1885-9 the wholesale cost of the more than 300 commodities included in the computation was $91.67, but that in the period 1905-9 these same commodities cost $108.88, while during the years 1917-21 they averaged $219.70.[2] On this basis, the price

[2] It is unfortunate that it was necessary to use as an index of changes in the living costs in Windsor County between 1885 and 1921, Dun's index, which deals with the price of commodities at wholesale for the entire United States; but careful inquiry within the county and also a comparison with Mr. Gill's results indicate that this index, which is the only one available for the entire period covered, does not seriously misrepresent the actual cost of living changes in the county.

levels rose between 1905-9 and 1885-9 slightly less than 20 per cent. This increase of 20 per cent. compares with Mr. Gill's average estimate for the same period of 24 per cent., and indicates that Dun's index gives us a picture of the changes in prices that is quite comparable with his. If anything, the Dun figure is conservative, for it does not make the rise so great as Mr. Gill had estimated. As to the period 1917-21, Dun's index indicates that the cost of its 300 commodities had increased approximately 140 per cent. over the 1885-9 average. At first this may seem like an exorbitant increase; but when it is remembered that prices between 1914 and 1920 virtually doubled, and that during 1890 to 1914 there was a steady but less rapid increase in the cost of living, this estimate is not unreasonable. For example, the cost of living index of the Massachusetts State Commission more than doubled between 1913 and 1920.

Some concrete indication of the extent of the changes in the cost of living in Windsor County can be secured from the following figures showing comparable prices for 1908 and 1922. The figures themselves were secured from the account books of a minister in the county who for many years has kept accurate records of his household expenses.

Commodity, etc.	*Unit of Measure*	*Retail Price* 1908	1922
Coal	ton	$7.00	$16.00
Milk	quart	.05	.10
Butter	pound	.25	.55
Wood	cord	3.50	8.00
Tax rate	per cent.	1.70	4.20

The price of milk, it is plain, exactly doubled while the prices of butter, coal and wood rose appreciably more. The tax rate, too, increased approximately two and one-half fold. When it is recalled that the price level in 1908 was appreciably higher than in 1888, our estimate of a 140 per cent. increase in the last thirty-three years is apparently valid.[3]

[3] The Bureau of Labor Statistics *Bulletin No. 300,* May, 1922. p. 171-2, shows that wages for the United States as a whole between 1907 and 1920 more than doubled while retail food prices increased almost two and one-half fold.

In working out the purchasing power of money for the two periods 1905-9, 1917-21, this study relied entirely upon Dun's index. For this reason it was necessary to re-compute the figures that Mr. Gill used in translating dollars into purchasing power for his second period. These changes, however, were slight, since we simply used 20 per cent. as the correct figure for the second period, while Mr. Gill, who estimated the increase for each township separately, used figures averaging 24 per cent. Our revised estimates, therefore, do not affect his trends in any material degree. On this basis, the average expenditure figures for our forty-nine churches at the three periods are as follows:

TABLE XXXVI—AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURES OF 49 CHURCHES

Location of Church	No. of Churches	In Actual Dollars			Index Number (1885–9 = 100)		
		1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921	1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921
Village	29	$1,292	$1,511	$2,264	100.0	117.0	175.2
Open Country..	20	498	573	669	100.0	115.1	134.3
Total	49	$968	$1,128	$1,612	100.0	116.5	166.5
		Purchasing Power in 1885–9 — Dollars			Index Number (1885–9 = 100)		
Village	29	$1,292	$1,272	$945	100.0	98.4	73.1
Open Country..	20	498	482	279	100.0	96.8	56.0
Total	49	$968	$949	$672	100.0	98.0	69.4

The average expenditure a church, for the forty-nine churches here considered, rose from $968 in the first period to $1,128 in the second period, and $1,612 in the third. At first thought this may seem like a decisive gain, for it indicates that in the last generation expenditures increased two-thirds. But when these expenditures are translated into purchasing power on the basis of 1885-9 dollars, they represent only $949 in the second period and $672 in the third. In other words, an average expenditure of $1,612 during the period 1917-21 is equivalent only to as much as $672

would have bought in 1885-9. The increase of expenditures in terms of actual dollars have been at a lower rate in the open country than in the village. In the last generation the open country churches increased their average expenditures only from $498 to $669, or one-third; while the village churches increased theirs from $1,292 to $2,264, or 75 per cent.

Table XXXVII presents changes in the average individual contributions of members during the three periods, and shows the same general tendencies as the average expendi-

TABLE XXXVII—AVERAGE ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF 49 CHURCHES

Location of Church	No. of Churches	In Actual Dollars			Index Number (1885–9 = 100)		
		1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921	1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921
Village	29	$11.99	$13.27	$17.80	100.0	110.7	148.5
Open Country	20	8.66	11.05	15.32	100.0	127.6	176.9
Total	49	$11.09	$12.74	$17.33	100.0	114.9	156.3
		Purchasing Power in 1885–9 — Dollars			Index Number (1885–9 = 100)		
Village	29	$11.99	$11.17	$7.43	100.0	93.2	62.0
Open Country	20	8.66	9.30	6.39	100.0	107.3	73.8
Total	49	$11.09	$10.72	$7.24	100.0	96.7	65.3

tures of churches—an increase in dollars but a decrease in purchasing power.

Curiously enough the open country churches here make a somewhat better showing than those in the villages. Between our first and last periods the average village church member increased his contributions one-half, compared with a 77 per cent. increase in the open country. The explanation lies in the fact that church membership in the open country areas has been decreasing, while in the villages it has been increasing. In 1888 the total number of members in the open country churches was 1,149; but by 1921 it had

fallen to 873. Thus the expenditures in these churches had to be proportioned over an ever-decreasing membership. The village churches, on the other hand, increased from 3,127 members in 1888 to 3,687 in 1921, meaning, of course,

TABLE XXXVIII.—AVERAGE ANNUAL BENEVOLENCES OF 49 CHURCHES

Location of Church	No. of Churches	In Actual Dollars 1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921	Index Number (1885–9 = 100) 1885–1889	1905–1909	1917–1921
Village							
Contributions							
a Church..	29	$328.00	$230.00	$599.00	100.0	70.1	182.6
a Member.		3.04	2.02	4.71	100.0	66.4	154.9
Open Country							
Contributions							
a Church..	20	53.00	48.00	120.00	100.0	90.6	226.4
a Member.		.92	.93	2.75	100.0	101.1	298.9
Total							
Contributions							
a Church..	49	216.00	156.00	403.00	100.0	72.2	186.6
a Member.		2.47	1.76	4.33	100.0	71.3	175.3
		Purchasing Power in 1885–9 — Dollars			Index Number (1885–9 = 100)		
Village							
Contributions							
a Church..	29	$328.00	$194.00	$250.00	100.0	59.1	76.2
a Member.		3.04	1.70	1.96	100.0	55.9	64.5
Open Country							
Contributions							
a Church..	20	53.00	40.00	50.00	100.0	75.4	94.3
a Member.		.92	.78	1.15	100.0	84.8	125.0
Total							
Contributions							
a Church..	49	216.00	131.00	168.00	100.0	60.6	77.8
a Member.		2.47	1.48	1.81	100.0	59.9	73.3

that the expenditures of these churches were distributed over an increasing number of people.

Summarizing, we are forced to the conclusion that church expenditures in Windsor County over the last generation have appreciably increased, although at only half the rate at which price levels have advanced.

FLUCTUATIONS IN BENEVOLENCES

While this tendency holds true for the total expenditures of our forty-nine churches, it does not hold for the various items that enter into the churches' budgets. The most noticeable exception is shown by the expenditures for missionary and benevolent purposes.

Whether we use average benevolences of individual churches or of individual members, the figures show that between our first and second periods benevolences declined

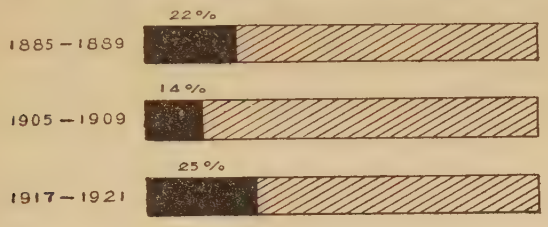


CHART XIX—PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL BUDGET OF 49 WINDSOR COUNTY CHURCHES DEVOTED TO BENEVOLENCES AT THE THREE PERIODS

sharply in purchasing power and that, even in actual dollars, contributions for this purpose in village churches dropped, roughly, one-third, while in the open country they just held their own. During the last dozen years, however, there has been a great change. In the village churches, benevolences in terms of dollars more than doubled over the 1905-9 average, while they increased two-and-one-half fold in the open country. Even in terms of purchasing power, the amounts given at the last period were greater than the 1905-9 averages, while in the open country churches these amounts represent 25 per cent. more purchasing power than the contributions of 1885-9. Why this sudden change in trend? The explanation is to be found in the numerous denominational drives of recent years. After the war, virtually all the bigger denominations put on campaigns to in-

crease the contributions for the general work of the church. The effect of these drives in Windsor County is clearly seen in Chart XIX, which shows the proportion of the total expenditures of individual churches devoted to benevolences at each of the three periods. This chart shows that our forty-nine churches at the first period spent 22 per cent. of their incomes for benevolences. At the second period, however, this expenditure had fallen to 14 per cent.; but recently, thanks to the "drives," it has gone up to 25 per cent.

When considering the gain in benevolences as a result of denominational campaigns, the question arises whether these gains have been made at the expense of the minister's salary. Complete information about salaries could be obtained for only forty-one of the forty-nine churches for which total expenditure and benevolence data were available. Since all but one of the eight churches eliminated were located in the open country, it was felt that county averages based upon this reduced sample might appear to be misleading, because it would seem that this group would give disproportionate weighting to the village churches. Our original sample of forty-nine churches included twenty-nine village and twenty open country, while this group of forty-one churches is made up of twenty-eight village and thirteen open country. To avoid the criticism that these forty-one churches are not strictly comparable with the forty-nine used in our previous tables, it was decided to compile in addition to an arithmetical total for the forty-one, a weighted total which would average the salaries of the two types of churches as though there were twenty-nine village and twenty open country churches. Table XXXIX gives this information.

These figures, which include the estimated rental value of parsonages, show that twenty-eight village churches paid their pastors $793 each in 1885-9, $918 in 1905-9, and $1,198 in 1917-21; while the thirteen open country churches paid their ministers only $522 at the first period, $557 at the second, and $662 at the last. In every case the rate of increase lagged behind the increase in the total expenditure of individual churches. The same is true for our "weighted total," which shows that for the last generation salaries in-

creased only 44 per cent., while expenditures, as we saw a moment ago, increased two-thirds during the same period. It would seem, therefore, that salaries may have suffered at the expense of benevolences, although not to the extent that might have been imagined in view of the phenomenal increase in contributions for benevolent enterprises.

TABLE XXXIX—AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT FOR SALARY IN 41 OF THE 49 CHURCHES
(Including Rental Value of Parsonage)

		In Actual Dollars			*Index Number (1885–9 = 100)*		
Location of Church	*No. of Churches*	*1885–1889*	*1905–1909*	*1917–1921*	*1885–1889*	*1905–1909*	*1917–1921*
Village	28	$793	$918	$1,198	100.0	115.8	151.1
Open Country..	13	522	557	662	100.0	106.7	126.8
Total	41	$707	$804	$1,028	100.0	113.7	145.4
Total (weighted average) ...	*49*	*$682*	*$771*	*$979*	*100.0*	*113.1*	*143.5*
		In Purchasing Power of 1885–9 — Dollars			*Index Number (1885–9 = 100)*		
Village	28	$793	$773	$500	100.0	97.5	63.1
Open Country..	13	522	469	276	100.0	89.8	52.9
Total	41	$707	$677	$429	100.0	95.8	60.7
Total (weighted average) ...	*49*	*$682*	*$649*	*$408*	*100.0*	*95.2*	*59.8*

Summarizing, our analysis has shown that during the last generation, the proportion of the Protestant inhabitants in Windsor County who were church members has remained virtually unchanged; while money contributions have increased, though only half as rapidly as living costs. From the standpoint of the denominational executives, one of the most interesting changes over the last thirty years has been the fall and rise of contributions for missionary and benevolent enterprises, the moral being that church leaders through concerted action can decidedly influence the policies of rural churches.

Chapter XI

THE TREND OF ATTENDANCE IN WINDSOR COUNTY

Thus far we have compared the church life of Windsor County over the last generation by the two customary standards—membership ratios and average financial contributions. The result is a confusing picture. Our analysis of expenditures has shown that although church contributions have increased during the last generation, these increases have not kept pace with increases in the cost of living. Membership ratios, on the other hand, show that the proportion of Protestant church members to the county's Protestant population has remained almost the same at all three periods.

On the basis of this evidence alone, one might conclude that all was well with Windsor County's churches. It could be argued that the lower purchasing power of the church expenditures could be explained by a natural lag in the adjustment between contributions and price levels, especially as increases in the cost of living were so violent during the last period under consideration. In support of this position, we have figures for membership ratios showing that the proportion of inhabitants who are church members is as high to-day as a generation ago.

THE GILL METHOD

In the light of these facts, let us analyze the attendance data collected by Mr. Gill in 1908, and by this Institute in 1922, to see how this index compares with money and membership ratios. To obtain data concerning attendance at church services, the earlier investigators in Windsor County had recourse to an ingenious method which Mr. Pinchot named the Gill method. Having secured from each township, both for 1888 and 1908, tax lists, which in Vermont

include the names of all who pay poll taxes, Mr. Gill consulted many reliable witnesses among the older residents as to the churchgoing habits of every member of the families represented. Each individual he assigned to one of several groups, according as the individual was credibly reported to have attended church. At first Mr. Gill tried to use six classifications; but he ended by dividing the Protestant population, so far as it was represented by his tax lists, into four groups, namely; (1) non-churchgoers; (2) those attending service less than one-third of the Sundays; (3) "frequent attendants," present from one-third to two-thirds of the Sundays; and (4) "regular attendants," who went to church more than two-thirds of the time.

This method, it is plain, ought to give reasonably reliable data for 1908, which was the year of the survey. The figures for the earlier period may not seem equally trustworthy, because Mr. Gill had to rely upon the testimony of the older inhabitants. Special circumstances combined to promote the accuracy of these figures. In 1888 the communities were small, even the villages now most populous having then held far fewer inhabitants. Communication with the outside world was more difficult than now, so that people were still more preoccupied with the affairs of their neighbors. Habits as to churchgoing were in those days more pronounced. Moreover, the custom of keeping accurate attendance records was not at all unusual. Finally, Vermonters have a caution almost Scotch in regard to positive statements.

With all these favoring circumstances, it is less remarkable that in general witnesses were strikingly unanimous in the classification of their old neighbors according to churchgoing habits. Upon certain cases, Mr. Gill expended a great deal of patient labor, often consulting ten or a dozen different witnesses. Taken all together, it is probable that the earlier figures are reasonably reliable.

The final figures used by Mr. Gill were the number of "frequent and regular attendants" at the two periods, enumerated not only for the county as a whole, but for townships and for individual churches separately. As stated

before, the evidence was designed to afford a sufficient basis of comparison, rather than to give comprehensive data about church attendance for the entire county. Although Mr. Gill gave the number of attendants for every church in the county, the figures include only persons attending church from one-third of the time to all the time. To insure that data presented should be applicable at once to individual churches and to townships, all persons were omitted who crossed township lines in going to church. Churchgoers from outside the county limits, of whom there were not many, were naturally left out of account; as were the relatively small number of travelers and summer visitors. Unnaturalized Protestant foreigners without taxable property were excluded; and, since women were not subject to a poll tax, the totals did not include the families of poor widows with children under voting age. As the same course, however, was strictly pursued in obtaining both sets of data, the evidence was adequate to establish the fact of a decline.

The survey planned and executed with so much care revealed a decided decline in the number of frequent and regular attendants for Mr. Gill's twenty-year period. He found that in 1888 there were 8,003 persons in the county who attended church more than one-third of the Sundays in the year; but that in 1908 the number had dropped to 5,537, or a loss of 31 per cent. As the Protestant population of the county fell during the same interval from 30,364 to 29,785, the relative loss in attendance after making allowance for this small decrease in Protestant population was 29 per cent.

When attempting to bring the Gill study up to date, it was thought inadvisable for this Institute to gather attendance figures by this method, especially as an alternative method presented itself. Mr. Gill had had unusual opportunities to conduct his study which this Institute could not hope to enjoy. Even before the survey he had been a resident in the county, and therefore knew the church situation thoroughly. In the case of the Springfield Congregational Church, for example, where considerable doubts arose regarding the exact year when certain persons became regular or frequent attendants, Mr. Gill was able to find a person

who moved into town in 1888 and his evidence settled the question. Because Mr. Gill knew his witnesses intimately, he was able to weigh the reliability of their evidence in a way that a stranger could not hope to do, and to secure splendid coöperation from them. Men and women, because of their personal regard for Mr. Gill, were willing to devote freely of their time in order to give him the data he desired.

AVERAGE COUNTED ATTENDANCE

Because this Institute could not hope to enjoy the same advantages as Mr. Gill no effort was made to bring this study up to date by his method. Instead it was agreed to use as our major source of evidence for the last period, a second method which Mr. Gill had also employed. In addition to his own scheme for contrasting attendance at the two periods, Mr. Gill also followed the better-known procedure of getting actual counts regarding the number of persons who usually attended the services of various churches in the county. Fortunately a considerable proportion of the churches in Windsor County have precise attendance records extending over many years. The Congregational and Baptist churches receiving Home Mission Aid were required then, as now, to keep such records. Moreover, certain church members had developed the habit of counting the congregations. It was from these and similar sources that Mr. Gill gathered his counted attendance data.

The attendance records kept in the majority of churches, and the records invariably used by Mr. Gill, were for the "main service" only. By "main service" is meant the one at which the formal order of exercise is employed. In Windsor County these services, which generally constitute the principal preaching service of any church, were held in the morning or afternoon. This method, therefore, left out of account the new faces at a second service held on Sunday evenings. But the number of such services was small since the majority of churches in this county held but one service a Sunday. Moreover, as the same method was ap-

plied uniformly at all three periods, the results are strictly comparable.

In his book, *The Country Church,* Mr. Gill published counted attendance figures for thirty-six churches at his first period. It is these figures that form the basis of the investigation into attendance made by this Institute. Instead of collecting current information about churches according to the Gill method, it was decided to secure counted attendance figures for 1921 which would be strictly comparable with those already gathered by Mr. Gill. The results of the comparative study conducted on this basis are presented in the following table. As before, churches have been grouped under two heads, village and open country, in order to show the different trends between the groups. In certain cases counted attendance figures were not available for 1888. In such cases the year used has been printed in parenthesis. In no case, however, has the figure for a different year been utilized where the data for 1888 were available. The actual figures are given in Table XL.

TABLE XL—COUNTED ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR 36 CHURCHES IN 1888 AND 1921

Village Churches		*Counted Attendance*		*Per Cent. Loss*
Community	*Denomination*	*1888*	*1921*	*1888–1921*
Bethel	Cong.	90	35	
Cavendish	Bapt.	75	55	
Chester	Bapt.	125	75	
"	Cong.	175 (1882)	100	
Hartford	Cong.	160	80	
Ludlow	Bapt.	140	75	
"	Cong.	90 (1882)	80	
"	M. E.	75	70	
North Springfield	Bapt.	100	85	
Norwich	Cong.	140 (1882)	80	
Queechee	Cong.	130 (1882)	45	
Rochester	Cong.	117 (1882)	60	
South Royalton	Cong.	90	45	
Springfield	Cong.	220	200	
Windsor	Bapt.	160	35	
"	Cong.	150 (1882)	55	
Woodstock	Cong.	167 (1880)	120	
Total—17 Churches		2,204	1,295	41.2

TABLE XL—COUNTED ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR 36 CHURCHES IN 1888 AND 1921—*Continued*

Open Country Churches		Counted Attendance		Per Cent. Loss
Community	*Denomination*	*1888*	*1921*	*1888–1921*
Andover	Bapt.	40	15 * Seasonal	
Ascutneyville	Cong.	93 (1882)	25	
Bridgewater	Cong.	65	47	
East Bethel	Bapt.	48 (1885)	21	
Felchville (Reading)	Bapt.	60	†	
Gaysville (Stockbridge)	Cong.	60	45 ‡ Federated	
Hartland	Cong.	80	50	
North Hartland	M. E.	55	30 §	
Perkinsville (Weathersfield)	Bapt.	75	45	
Pomfret	Cong.	75	54	
Royalton Center	Cong.	76 (1882)	38	
Sharon	Cong.	75 (1882)	35	
"	Bapt.	50 (1887)	**	
Tyson (Plymouth)	Cong.	35 (1890)	15	
Weathersfield Center	Cong.	75 (1889)	25	
West Hartford	Cong.	70 (1882)	37	
Weston	Cong.	60	**	
"	Bapt.	160	66	
"	M. E.			
Total—19 Churches		1,252	548	56.2
Grand total—36 Churches		3,456	1,843	46.7

* 4 services a month for three months only.
† Inactive.
‡ Includes figures for M. E. church with which it is now federated.
§ Now a preaching point.
** Abandoned.

Before discussing the figures themselves, a word should be said about the denominations represented. From our tables it is clear that the majority of churches for which counted attendance figures were available belong to the Congregational denomination. It is felt, however, that these churches are quite typical of the others. The Congregational Church is numerically the largest denomination in the county, and it is believed that in the last generation its churches have not suffered a more severe decline than the

average church throughout the area. The Baptist Church, too, is quite representative of the average for the area.

Our sample has three churches that were abandoned over the last period; one that became inactive; and another that lost its activity through federation. In addition it includes one that is now only a preaching point and one that declined into a seasonal church. Proportionately the number of such churches is somewhat below the average for the county as a whole, and would therefore tend to present a more optimistic picture of the church situation at the last period than all the facts might warrant. However, in order to be conservative no allowance has been made for this fact.

Turning now to the actual figures, our table shows that in the first period the counted congregations at the principal Sunday service in the seventeen village churches averaged 2,204; but that in 1921 this figure had dropped to 1,295, representing a loss of more than 40 per cent. This loss was not caused by a decided decline in any particular group of these churches, but was general throughout them all. It is particularly significant that not a single one of these seventeen churches had as large an average counted attendance in 1921 as in 1888; and this in spite of the fact that the population of the village townships during the last generation increased 34 per cent.

Turning next to the nineteen open country churches, we find that attendance dropped from 1,252 at the first period to 548 in 1921. Even these figures tend to minimize the decline, because two of the figures utilized at the second period underestimate the loss in attendance. The Andover Baptist Church, which has been accredited with an average attendance of fifteen in 1921, holds services for only three months in the year, while the average attendance of forty-five for the Gaysville Congregational Church in 1921 includes in reality members of the Methodist Episcopal Church with which it was federated in 1918. Even though these two cases tend unduly to swell the average attendance in 1921, they have been used in this comparison because it might have appeared arbitrary to exclude them entirely. This Institute was especially anxious to avoid overestimating the

decline. Nevertheless our figures show a startling drop in church attendance. There is not a single open country church that does not show a pronounced decrease in attendance. Indeed, the smallest rate of decline for any of the nineteen churches in this group is 25 per cent. This exceptional record is made by the Gaysville Congregational church, which, as already noted, is an unusual case. For all these open country churches, the decline averaged 56 per cent., which is an even greater decrease than was shown by our village figures. This difference, however, is not surprising since the country areas have been steadily losing in population, while the villages have been gaining.

When the two groups of churches are combined, the decline in attendance averages 47 per cent. But this figure does not take into consideration the increase in the Protestant population over the last generation, which, as already stated, was 11 per cent. In proportion, therefore, to the Protestant population, the decline in church attendance over the last thirty-three years as indicated by our thirty-six churches is 52 per cent. In other words, attendance at church is only half that of a generation ago.

This is not all. There is good reason to believe that in 1888 church attendance compared with an even earlier period was on the decline. Attendance data for 1870 are available in Mr. Gill's *The Country Church* for twenty-four of our thirty-six churches and present the following picture:

TABLE XLI—COUNTED ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR 24 CHURCHES IN 1870, 1888 AND 1921

					Index Number 1888 = 100		
	No. of	Attendance					
Location	Churches	1870	1888	1921	1870	1888	1921
Village	11	1,766	1,529	900	115.5	100.	58.9
Open Country ...	13	1,004	832	370	120.7	100.	44.5
Total	24	2,770	2,361	1,270	117.3	100.	53.8

These figures show that attendance in these twenty-four churches was 17 per cent. higher in 1870 than in 1888. As before, our figures indicate a more rapid decline in the open

country than in the villages. A glance at Chart XVII in Chapter IX, which charts the population trends in village and open country townships separately, again explains the difference. Between 1870 and 1890 the population of the village townships remained nearly stationary, while the open country ones steadily declined.

Summarizing, the available attendance information for Windsor County over the last generation shows that according to the Gill method there was, between 1888 and 1908, a proportionate loss of 29 per cent. in the number of frequent and regular attendants at church. Between 1888 and 1921, this loss, when the counted attendance figures are used instead of the Gill method, reached 52 per cent. Moreover, counted attendance figures for 1870 indicate that over 17 per cent. more people attended church at that time than in 1888, and this in spite of the fact that the population of the county between 1870 and 1890 declined less than 12 per cent. The conclusion is unavoidable. Church interest in Windsor County, as indicated by attendance, has declined during the last generation at an alarming rate.

THE RATE OF DECLINE IN ATTENDANCE

As far as this particular study is concerned, there is hardly need for presenting further evidence regarding attendance in Windsor County. The facts unavoidably point to a startling decrease in church attendance during the last generation. As the main purpose was to show that attendance figures might tell a story very different from the story told by either money contributions or membership ratios, our major purpose in presenting this material has been accomplished. Nevertheless something further should be said in order that church leaders in the county itself may not deceive themselves as to the real nature of the church decline during the last thirteen years.

When Mr. Gill made his study he also estimated church decline by the counted attendance method. According to his figure the decline between 1888 and 1908 was 41 per cent. In proportion to the population this represents a loss

of 40 per cent. In the light of these facts, some one may argue that the rate of decline in attendance over the last period has been less than during the one covered by Mr. Gill. But even this feeble consolation is not justified. For one thing, Mr. Gill utilized a somewhat different method in arriving at his 40 per cent. decline. He did not confine himself entirely to counted attendance figures, but in certain cases used two-thirds of the frequent and regular attendants as an estimate of the average counted attendance figures.

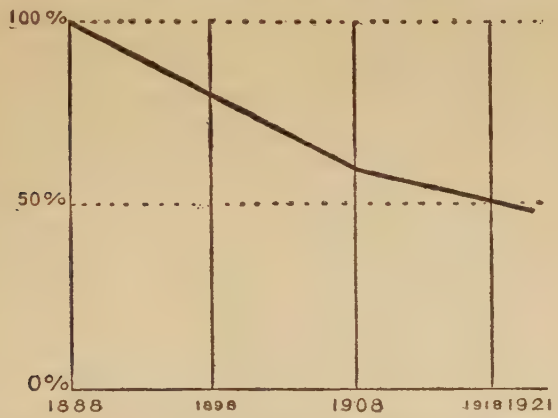


CHART XX—TREND OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN WINDSOR COUNTY SINCE 1888

Average attendance in 1888 = 100%

Therefore, his figures should not be compared too minutely with our own. An even more significant factor is the difference in length between the two periods involved. The first interval covered twenty years, while the second covered only thirteen. Therefore, even if the rate of decline remained the same one would not expect the percentage of decline to be as great during the second interval as during the first. Indeed, if one takes account of these differences in the length of the two periods, as well as the differences in population trends, it will be found that the *rate* of decline during the last thirteen years is almost the same as that discovered by the earlier investigators. Chart XX

shows graphically the trend over both periods. Notice that there is only a slight break at 1908. Clearly, the rate of decline has remained virtually constant during both intervals.

In the light of the facts, the church situation in Windsor County is not nearly as bright as membership ratios and financial contributions might lead us to believe. This analysis, therefore, reaffirms the value of an attendance index in studying the church. Indeed, it shows such a startling decline that the question arises whether it is not more important to know the attendance trend than to know the tendency of money and membership ratios.

No matter how much one may explain away the decline in attendance as the result of the new age in which we live, certainly it is important for church leaders to know that even though the proportion of members throughout the country is increasing, people may be growing more and more apathetic to its services. Should the decline continue in Windsor County at its present rate, it is only a question of a few decades before the church will become a deserted institution.

Windsor County also furnishes a concrete illustration of the value of attendance data in bringing home to people the possibilities of a church decline which the two customary standards entirely failed to indicate. Before the publication of *The Country Church,* few in Windsor County were seriously disturbed over the religious outlook. But this book, because of its careful analysis of attendance data, convinced the great majority of church leaders of a fundamental decline in the hold of the church upon the lives of the people. It may be that this situation prevails in other counties. People may be deceiving themselves—as they were in Windsor County before the Gill and Pinchot survey—over the relatively pleasing picture presented by money contributions and membership ratios. For example, take the report of the Federal Council of Churches showing gains in church membership during the year 1922. Would data for church attendance, if they were available for the United States, show equally striking gains? Of course, it is clear, as Messrs.

Gill and Pinchot pointed out, that "attendance at Sunday worship is not the main object of Christian religion," [1] but our data bear out their further contention that "nevertheless there is no other index of the place of the church in the life of the people so reliable as attendance."

DATA FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Before closing this chapter, a word should be said about the material presented in the final table. The Windsor County survey in 1922 under the auspices of this Institute had a two-fold purpose. It was designed to look before and after. On the one hand its aim was to obtain the facts necessary to bring up to date the earlier study. On the other hand, it was hoped to gather the data needed to make further comparisons in the future. To fulfill the former purpose it would have been sufficient to obtain information comparable with that published in *The Country Church.* To prepare data for future comparison requires something more. The earlier inquiry, fortunately, covered a comparatively static period. Not only were the fifty-five churches included in the investigation virtually identical after twenty years, but the total number of churches in the county remained almost unchanged by the passage of a score of years.

Nevertheless the decline proved by Mr. Gill had brought some of the churches into the danger zone. During the shorter period since 1908, a considerable proportion of the churches in the county have become seasonal, inactive, or have been abandoned. In order, therefore, to prepare a body of data available for comparison during future years, it was thought necessary to include facts about all the active churches so that in the future it would be possible to contrast county totals. This material, covering not only attendance but membership figures and financial contributions, will be found in Table XLII.

[1] *The Country Church,* p. 15.

TABLE XLII—MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE AND EXPENDITURES AT THE THIRD PERIOD FOR THE 75 ACTIVE CHURCHES IN WINDSOR COUNTY

Community Village Churches	Denomination	1921 Membership Total	Resident	Active	1921 Average * Attendance	1917–1921 Average Expenditures Total	Benevolences	Salary Actual Payment	Salary Rental Value of Parsonage	Salary Total Payment
Bethel	Cong.	70	53	50	35	$1,121	$ 103	$ 796	...	$ 796
"	M. E.	68	68	53	26	1,111	188	735	$135	870
"	P. E.	54	54	54	21	785	151	294	180	474
"	Univ.	122	122	122	35	858	15	780	...	780
Cavendish	Bapt.	73	45	40	55	2,441	818	921	162	1,083
"	Univ.	10	9	9	.. †	80	1	32	...	32
Chester	Bapt.	176	120	120	75	3,156	871	1,240	162	1,402
"	Cong.	229	169	85	100	2,175	475	1,120	180	1,300
"	P. E.	35	35	35	25	1,035	148	304	285	589
"	Univ.	59	36	36	37	729	41	493	...	493
Hartford	Cong.	146	112	94	80	2,627	303	1,500	270	1,770
Ludlow	Bapt.	173	100	100	75	3,274	1,513	1,196	270	1,466
"	Cong.	200	131	103	80	2,201	580	973	324	1,297
"	M. E.	82	81	61	70	1,514	397	880	...	880
"	Univ.	44	30	25	.. †	807	20	534	...	534
No. Springfield	Ad. Xn.	32	26	26	54	384	8	278	...	278
" "	Bapt.	156	92	65	85	1,966	865	849	180	1,029
Norwich	Cong.	180	131	113	80	2,225	485	1,000	...	1,000
"	P. E.	29	29	29	30	1,344	109	757	...	757
Proctorsville	M. E.	48	48	42	31	1,344	411	587	54	641
"	P. E.	30	30	30	7	241	2	240	...	240

Queechee	Cong.	78	46	34	45	1,681	140	1,280	60	1,347
Rochester	Cong.	98	72	72	60	1,403	287	884	225	1,109
"	M. E.	88	80	80	58	1,475	501	835	135	970
"	Univ.	57	42	36	50	1,545	22	1,266	...	1,266
So. Royalton	Cong.	100	74	45	45	1,440	167	980	162	1,142
" "	M. E.	139	128	80	73	2,150	681	830	238	1,068
Springfield	Cong.	467	367	367	200	7,156	2,792	2,620	315	2,935
"	M. E.	424	400	350	222	8,309 ‡	1,988	1,840	270	2,110
"	P. E.	61	55	55	24	828	148	342	...	342
"	Univ.	131	83	83	75	2,484	104	1,483	270	1,753
White River Jct.	M. E.	181	159	159	118	5,119	1,102	1,380	270	1,650
" " "	P. E.	105	105	105	20	1,569	202	783	270	1,053
Wilder	Cong. }	126	107	90	90	1,946	189	1,185	225	1,410
"	M. E. }									
Windsor	Bapt.	47	38	29	35	1,971	481	1,078	74	1,152
"	Cong.	140	81	65	55	2,203	323	1,260	270	1,530
"	M. E.	179	149	100	118	2,583	580	1,120	...	1,120
"	P. E.	87	87	87	43	2,849	523	1,194	270	1,464
"	Unit'n	132	120	120	50	1,643	155	1,201	...	1,201
Woodstock	Xn.	199	156	151	50	1,822	107	1,024	180	1,204
"	Cong.	223	194	187	120	5,361	1,654	1,860	270	2,130
"	M. E.	85	72	45	.. †	2,194	1,157	799	...	799
"	P. E.	129	129	127	80	5,059 ‡	922	1,541	270	1,811
"	Univ.	72	50	47	55	2,006	41	1,010	252	1,262
Total for 44 churches		5,364	4,315	3,806	2,687	$96,317	$21,826	$43,309	$6,235	$49,544

* Average attendance is for principal Sunday service.

† Services held for less than a third of a year:
Average attendance for Cavendish Universalist—no information.
" " " Ludlow Universalist—20.
" " " Woodstock Methodist Episcopal—39.

‡ High expenditures due to heavy building expenses.

TABLE XLII—MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE AND EXPENDITURES AT THE THIRD PERIOD FOR THE 75 ACTIVE CHURCHES IN WINDSOR COUNTY—*Continued*

Community	*Denomination*	*1921 Membership* Total	Resident	Active	*1921 Average* Attendance*	*1917–1921 Average Expenditures* Total	Benevolences	Salary: Actual Payment	Salary: Rental Value of Parsonage	Salary: Total Payment
Open Country Churches										
Andover	Bapt.	11	11	7	..§	$ 298	$ 25	$ 170	...	$ 170
Ascutneyville	M. E. / Cong.	66	52	52	25	476	153	248	...	248
Barnard / East Barnard	M. E.	101	56	48	87	1,753	613	894	$ 90	984
Barnard**	Univ.	11	6	6	..§	568	12	424	...	424
Bethel Gilead††	M. E.	21	9	8	29	269	41	207	...	207
Bethel Lympus**	M. E.	37	37	25	..§	83	8	75	...	75
Bridgewater	Cong.	58	44	31	47	375	1	375	108	483
Brownsville	M. E.	86	74	74	43	1,373	342	750	135	885
East Bethel	Bapt.	9	5	3	21	180	25	125	...	125
East Bethel‡‡	Univ.	11	7	6	15	25	...	25	...	25
Felchville	Univ.	16	9	5	12	311	14	253	...	253
Gaysville	Cong. / M. E.	28	24	20	45	539	48	389	...	389
"	Univ.	6	6	5	12	91	...	82	...	82

Hartland	Cong.	61	39	38	50	1,284	183	813	135	948
"	M. E.	41	38	37	37	636	81	452	90	542
"	Univ.	35	35	20	.. §	...	...	...	...	...
Perkinsville	Bapt.	65	30	28	45	1,157	283	720	...	720
Pomfret	Cong	74	52	46	54	995	180	700	...	700
Royalton Center	Cong.	60	47	36	38	788	245	375	...	375
" "	P. E.	15	15	8	4	176	35	120	...	120
Sharon	Cong.	80	50	38	35	1,385	65	1,025	130	1,155
Simonsville **	Cong.	12	2	2	.. §	104	12	53	...	53
South Reading	M. E.	27	21	21	21	542	59	275	...	275
Stockbridge	Univ.	18	12	12	17	404	13	225	...	225
"	M. E.									
Tyson	Cong.	32	29	13	15	330	37	176	...	176
Union Village	Cong.	66	43	37	58	725	167	458	90	548
Weathersfield Bow	Cong.	8	6	6	15	128	40	112	...	112
Weathersfield Center	Cong.	30	17	17	25	139	40	91	...	91
West Hartford	Cong.	47	29	29	37	1,145	138	580	...	580
Weston	M. E.	84	76	16	66	993	92	775	67	842
Total for 30 churches		1,216	881	694	853	$17,272	$2,952	$10,967	$845	$11,812
Grand total for 74 churches.		6,580	5,196	4,500	3,540	$113,589	$24,778	$54,276	$7,080	$61,356

§ Services held less than a third of year:
Average attendance for Andover Baptist—15.
" " " Barnard Universalist—35.
" " " Bethel Lympus Methodist Episcopal—15.
" " " Hartland Universalist—40.
" " " Simonsville Congregational—25.

** Seasonal at first two periods; not included in Mr. Gill's study.
†† Inactive at first two periods.
‡‡ Organized as church in 1907.

Chapter XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was not merely to assemble facts about churches but to measure the degree of interrelationship between different series of facts relating to the church. How and to what extent is church life correlated with economic prosperity? What is the effect of a large or a small membership upon other phases of a church's activities? Answers were sought to such questions as these.

Before it was possible to determine accurately the degree of interrelationship between two or more sets of facts, it was essential to have precise measurements of the facts themselves. This in turn involved the need of uniform standards of comparison. The discussion presented in Part I of this study dealt therefore with various ways of measuring churches. In this section a new unit of comparison was developed based upon the aggregate time or attendance interest devoted monthly to church. It is confidently believed that this is a better basis of comparison than either money or membership data. The actual cash that a member can afford to give to church is so closely tied up with his economic prosperity that financial comparisons mean little or nothing as indices of religious interest, unless, of course, the churches compared are situated in equally prosperous areas where, on the average, the church members have much the same opportunities to contribute. On the other hand, the analysis in this study showed that for churches scattered widely over the United States, the average cash contributions of members gave an entirely erroneous impression of the relative importance of the churches. The very localities that gave the largest money donations a member tended to make the poorest religious showing when judged by membership or attendance interest ratios. As between these two,

the membership ratio, while a far better standard than the money measure, nevertheless was not so satisfactory as the attendance interest ratio, which is the average time contribution of the inhabitants to church. This was but natural, since the amount of time people devote to an organization is obviously more significant of their interest in that organization than is the mere fact of their being members of it. This is particularly true concerning the church, since in certain rural areas social pressure is so strong that it predisposes a man to join the church, while in other localities just the reverse is true. When, therefore, we compared church life on the basis of the average amount of time that inhabitants devoted to church, we found that the place of the church in the life of different counties, while closely correlated with membership ratios, nevertheless showed less variation from county to county than the membership ratios showed. This fact is important because it reveals the danger of overestimating the importance of the rural church in counties in which the proportion of church members to inhabitants is high and of underestimating it where this proportion is low.

It was also found by further analysis that even the relatively small differences in attendance interest ratios from county to county could be accounted for, in part at least, by such purely environmental factors as the age of the community and the density of its population. This seems to prove that the interest of people in the church is far more uniform throughout the rural areas of the United States than has generally been believed.

Various methods of comparing churches having been analyzed and evaluated, an effort was then made, as described in Part II, to find tendencies or trends that are at work among Protestant churches in rural areas. This part of the study fell into two parts: to ascertain how its *environment* affected the church and then to discover some of the church's *internal* factors that modified its activities.

First, with respect to the environmental factors, it was found that there is a decided tendency for economic conditions to affect not only the financial aspects of a church's

life but, in addition, all the other phases of its life dependent upon the local support of the members. The study showed, for example, not only that the average contributions of individual members varied with the wealth of the locality in which the churches were situated, but also that even the presence or absence of a resident minister was dependent largely upon economic conditions. The data seemed to indicate, however, that economic conditions as a limiting factor became of decreasing importance as the localities became increasingly wealthy. Indeed, the conclusion was apparently justified that after a certain point had been reached it was a question whether increasing prosperity increased per capita contributions to church. There seems to be a point at which average individual donations of members reach a maximum and beyond which they are unaffected by increases in wealth. This study found the explanation of this to lie in the highly stereotyped program of the rural church which shows relatively little variation compared with variations in economic prosperity. Thus the question arises whether denominational leaders should not deliberately plan to put on broader church programs in rich regions.

The study also showed density of population to be another environmental factor that limits church development. Certainly the results disclosed a definite tendency for the church, as judged by the attendance interest of the inhabitants, to increase in importance as the populations of village and open country areas become increasingly dense. Here again, the facts seemed to bear out the theory that increasing density does not continue indefinitely to increase a church's development, but that this trend, too, reaches a maximum. Indeed, the importance of the church probably tends to decline when density increases beyond a certain point, or in other words, there is an "optimum density" under which the church thrives best.

The racial make-up of the population was found to be a third environmental consideration directly affecting the church. This might not have been an important factor had we not been dealing with Protestant churches only. In the circumstances, however, it was an important element be-

cause it helped to determine the ratio between Catholic and Protestant church members in each locality.

The growth or decline in the population of an area was found to be a fourth factor directly affecting the church. The study emphasized the marked tendency for the growth and the decline in church membership to follow population trends.

Region was found to be another environmental factor that reacts upon the church. The occupation of the inhabitants was a sixth factor, although its influence was more difficult to measure because the necessary information was lacking.

These facts bear out the hypothesis that organized religion is even more highly sensitive to changes in social and economic conditions than has generally been believed. This theory has a practical bearing upon church administration. In the past it has been assumed, at least tacitly, that there are only two environmental factors of such importance that they must be taken into consideration if a comparison of two or more churches is to have any real significance. These are region and density. The more progressive denominations are accustomed to limit their comparisons to individual churches located not only in the same major region of America but in communities of much the same size. On this basis a church in the South will not be compared directly with one located in the Middle West. Moreover, town churches are compared only with town churches, those of villages with other village churches, and those in open country areas with churches similarly located. Our analysis indicated, however, that although these distinctions are important they do not go far enough. The mere fact that two churches are located in the same region and in communities of the same type does not justify the making of comparisons between them unless their economic and social environments are comparable in other respects as well. Two village churches might be within a hundred miles of each other and yet, if one was in a highly prosperous community and the other in a relatively poverty-stricken locality, they would not be comparable. Certainly it is neces-

sary to take into consideration economic conditions as well as region and density before two churches can properly be regarded as comparably located. Indeed, it is probably more important that the two churches compared be located in equally prosperous communities than that they be situated in the same major region of America. To a less extent other factors, such as population trends and the racial make-up of the population, are also important. It is essential, therefore, before comparing one church with another, that they be located in strictly comparable social and economic settings, otherwise it is impossible to tell what part of the difference between them is caused by environmental factors and what by internal considerations.

The more important environmental factors that influence church life having been ascertained, the next step was to discover some of the internal factors that affected certain groups of comparably located churches. In this section, our monthly attendance index enabled us to apply a new standard of comparison based upon the average time or participation of individual members devoted monthly to church.

The analysis in this part of the study indicated that the size of a church's membership and its pastoral leadership, themselves closely interrelated factors, were two of the most important in determining the church's activities. It was found that these two factors go far to explain the average money contributions of members to their churches, the regularity with which the members participate in church services, and the nature and extent of the church program.

Regarding the relative merits of churches with small memberships and those with large, the study showed that if the goal of the church is conceived as "community service" then large churches are preferable to small churches, as they have more adequate resources in terms of men, money and leadership, to put on comparatively broad programs; but that small churches, as measured by their per capita time and money contributions, secure greater allegiance and devotion from their members.

The final section of this report dealt with changes during the last generation in the church life of Windsor County,

Vermont. The aim was to find how the place of the church in the life of this area had varied during the past thirty-five years. This part of the study offered an opportunity to make church comparisons on the basis of attendance data as well as on the more customary basis of money contributions and membership ratios. The facts showed that in Windsor County the proportion of people who belong to church is to-day almost exactly what it was in 1888. Moreover, the average cash contributions of the church members have been materially increased during the last generation, although the rate of increase has been only half as great as the rise in living costs. From these data, therefore, it might have been assumed that there had been no church decline in Windsor County. The decrease in the purchasing power of the money contributions to church could have been explained by a natural tendency for donations to lag behind price levels in a period when living costs were rising very rapidly, and since membership ratios have remained the same as in 1888, it could have been argued on this information alone that the church was as strong to-day as formerly. Attendance data, however, show that this is not true. They reveal a 50 per cent. decline in the proportion of people who regularly go to church, clearly indicating that Windsor County has suffered a decided church decline during the last three decades. In the light of these facts, the question arises whether it is not more important as an index of church life to know the regularity with which people attend church than to know the amount of money that the members contribute or the proportion of the population that belongs to church.

The most obvious criticism that can be leveled against this study is that some of the findings rest upon data drawn from too limited a field. It can be argued, for instance, that trends based solely upon an analysis of thirty-two counties are not convincing. To a certain extent, this objection is justified. Despite the fact that these counties were carefully selected as representative of the rural areas of America, nevertheless conclusions derived from so small a number of cases must be considered as tentative. Fortu-

nately, some of the trends developed in this report rest upon larger bodies of data. The important point, however, is not that the interrelationships presented in this study have been finally ascertained and measured, but rather that methods of analysis have been presented which, when applied to more extensive samples, should provide more reliable conclusions.

NEED OF FUTURE STUDIES

This study then is but one of a series of investigations that are necessary if we are to arrive at an adequate scientific understanding of how the rural church operates. "But," some one may argue, "why go on? What's the use of studies of this kind? Of course, they may be valuable from the standpoint of sociology; but what's their practical value? How can investigations of this sort help the church to function better?"

It is obviously impossible to indicate beforehand even the major uses to which any body of scientific information can be put. Who could have told *a priori* how the early discoveries in astronomy, physics and chemistry of three centuries ago would be the first steps in a revolution of social and economic life? In like manner, it is impossible to tell how scientific investigations in the social fields will modify social action. There are, however, two outstanding ways in which a knowledge of the tendencies that operate in the field of the rural church could be immediately utilized.

In the first place it would help to guide denominational executives in formulating their administrative policies. The possibility of increasing in prosperous areas the per capita donations to benevolent enterprises of the denomination has already been pointed out in Chapter III; and a clearer appreciation of the interaction of social and economic conditions upon the church would also help to mold policies in other ways. Take, for instance, the question of Home Mission Aid. Many of these grants are given on the false assumption that the churches concerned will speedily come to self-support. A clearer understanding of the limiting ef-

fect of economic conditions and population trends upon contributions would help to reduce the number of churches so aided that fail to become self-supporting. To this end a study should be made of aided churches in the effort to analyze the social and economic conditions of those churches that attained self-support and of those that failed. In this way, more precise standards might be evolved for granting Home Mission Aid in the future. In the same way bases for eliminating competition between aided churches might also be developed.

Similar considerations apply to church extension. Too often denominational funds are used to help erect rural churches that are far too large and expensive for the needs of the particular communities. A scientific study of this whole problem should reduce the amount of waste involved in such cases. These are but illustrations of the ways in which scientific knowledge of the tendencies governing the church should help denominational executives in almost every phase of their work.

A second use of scientific church studies would be to create norms or standards that would be of great value to local congregations. Take, for example, the data secured for our open country and small-village samples of churches. This material should enable all similarly situated churches to compare their own achievements with the average for the group; and in this way to come to definite conclusions regarding the relative effectiveness of their work compared, not with some impossible ideal, but with the average achievements of groups of churches facing the same problems as themselves. Comparisons of this kind should be vitally stimulating to all the churches concerned.

At present the greatest obstacle to carrying forward such impartial investigations of the church is the inadequacy of the available material. For instance, in order to create norms or standards for the rural churches in the United States, it would be necessary to analyze similarly situated groups of churches in all parts of the country; for certainly it is not safe to assume that standards that hold in one region

are applicable to another. To be concrete, one should not expect the results found in our Ohio samples to hold for southern churches.

At present, however, the difficulties involved in the collection of comparable data about large groups of rural churches are almost insuperable because under present conditions it would be necessary to send field investigators to gather the necessary information at first hand. This procedure would be essential both because the local churches in many cases keep totally inadequate records, and also because the records they do keep vary widely from one church to another. Even the meanings of such elementary terms as "member," "benevolences," "contributions," etc., differ from denomination to denomination. Hence at the present time it is out of the question to secure accurate and comparable data about individual churches from denominational headquarters.

In order, therefore, to further our scientific understanding of the church, the most immediate need is the standardizing of local church records. To this end a conference of denominational leaders should be called either by the Federal Government in connection with the next Religious Census or by the Federal Council of Churches. The purpose of the meeting should be the standardization of local church statistics. Such standardization, however, would not necessarily involve the keeping of additional church records but would merely aim to make the information secured so precise and accurate that it would be of significance for comparative purposes. Having available large bodies of detailed and comparable information about churches, we would then be in a position to gain a new insight into the workings of the church. A technique for analyzing such data is already available—we merely await the necessary information.

THE END

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